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THE ROMANCE OF PREACHING

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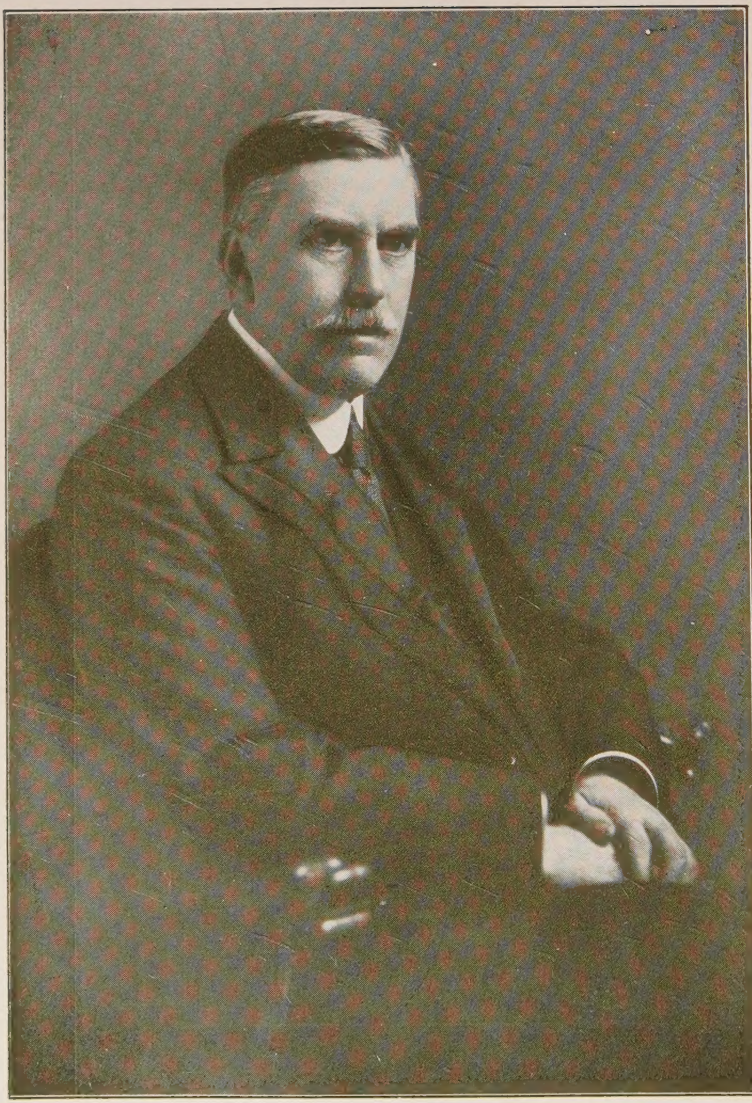

C. Silvester Horne

YALE LECTURES ON PREACHING

The Romance of Preaching

By
CHARLES SILVESTER HORNE

With an Introduction by
CHARLES R. BROWN, D. D.

And a Biographical Sketch by
HOWARD A. BRIDGMAN, D. D.

1793

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Preface

TO many of my husband's friends these lectures will come with a special message. They were much on his mind and heart, and before leaving England he spent many hours in their preparation. His affection for the American people had always been strong, and when the invitation came to him to deliver the Divinity Lectures at Yale University, he felt that it was an honour impossible to refuse, though the need for a complete rest was overwhelming. Into their delivery he put all the fire and enthusiasm that were so characteristic of him, and the testimony on all sides was that never before had the lecturer so gripped his audience, and so won all by his personality. Afterwards many of those who had heard him wrote to say how wonderful had been the help and uplift, and how in difficult places they would gain constant inspiration from his words.

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Three days after the last lecture he was called suddenly to the presence of the Master whom he served so faithfully. My earnest hope is, that his last message may still cheer and help many of his brother ministers whom he loved so well, and for whom he gave his best.

KATHARINE M. HORNE.

Church Stretton,
August, 1914.

Introduction

By Charles R. Brown, D. D., Dean of the Yale Divinity School

FROM the days when Henry Ward Beecher gave the first series of lectures on the "Lyman Beecher Foundation" in Yale University, on through those years when this service has been performed by such eminent men as Phillips Brooks and R. W. Dale, Henry van Dyke and John Watson, Lyman Abbott and George A. Gordon, Washington Gladden and Francis G. Peabody, the task of inspiring young ministers to nobler effort in their high calling has been well performed. But among them all, few lecturers have ever so gripped the divinity students, the larger audience of pastors in active service and the thoughtful people of New Haven as did Silvester Horne when he spoke to us on "The Romance of Preaching."

He was himself a shining example of those

high and chivalrous qualities which he would covet for the true prophet, and the younger Knights of the Cross responded to his spiritual appeal as to the bugle-call of a genuine leader.

The intellectual distinction which marked his utterances, the fine literary form in which they were phrased, the moral passion which gave to their delivery that energy which belongs to words which are "spirit and life," together with the rare spiritual insight displayed, all combined to make notable the service rendered by Mr. Horne to Yale University.

It seemed tragic that just three days after he had finished this course of lectures, he should suddenly be caught away like the prophet of old, from the deck of a steamer as he neared the city of Toronto where he was to preach next day at the University. Here, indeed, are his last words, spoken in an upper room to his brother ministers, younger and older, upon whom he had breathed his own spirit of intense devotion to the high task of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ!

The sense of loss to England and to America, and to the whole Christian world, made all hearts heavy. But "he being dead yet speaketh," in these inspiring words and in that genius for friendship which has left its benediction upon so many thousands of hearts, and in that distinguished service which it was his privilege to render to Church and to State on that side the water and on this.

Yale University.

A Biographical Sketch

By Howard A. Bridgman, D. D., Editor of "The Congregationalist"

INTO the forty-nine years of his earthly life Charles Silvester Horne poured a measure of service in behalf of his nation, his church and the world at large, such as can be credited to few of his contemporaries on either side of the Atlantic. He was fortunate in his ancestry, his training, his environment, his family, his friends, and in the opportunities that, from time to time, crossed his path, but the greatest of God's many gifts to him was a sense of the glory and seriousness of life and an eagerness, with God's help, to do his own part in the work of the world. A son of the manse he was born in Cuckfield, Sussex, England, April 15, 1865, took his arts course at Glasgow University, entering upon graduation the newly established theological school at Oxford known as Mansfield College, whose

principal, the late Dr. Andrew M. Fairbairn, was renowned for his learning and his personal influence over his pupils. Before the young theologue, who at once evinced his unusual qualifications for the ministry, completed his course, a church in London claimed him as its leader and there at Kensington for ten years in a fashionable section of the world's metropolis Mr. Horne preached and laboured, building up a compact and vigorous organization and gaining distinction even in his earliest years as a pulpit and platform orator. Then came the pull on his sensitive, daring nature of London's poverty and need. Leaving his attractive pastorate, where he had won popularity among all classes, he went to Whitefield's Central Mission which stands in Tottenham Court Road, close to the homes of the poor and to haunts of shame. Into this new enterprise he entered with characteristic zeal and soon developed a great church of the institutional type, pervaded with a homelike atmosphere and ministering Sundays and week days alike to clerks, artisans and other types of

working people, and exercising a beneficent influence over the neighbourhood, which sadly needed something to counteract the influence of the gin-house and brothel.

Meanwhile the Congregational Churches of England, and the Free Churches generally, had been claiming Mr. Horne's efficient assistance in the support of important enterprises. Invitations to speak here and there were showered upon him. He was honoured with the chairmanship of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Pressing public issues like the controversy over the Education Bill drew him into the arena of politics, and he became known as one of the most gallant and earnest fighters for freedom in Church and State. His rare oratorical gifts made him one of the favourite spokesmen of the Non-conformist conscience on many public occasions. It was natural, in view of the reliance placed upon him, that he should at last yield to the strong demand that he stand for Parliament, and in 1910 he was returned as junior Member for Ipswich. For a time he undertook to carry

the burden of his great church along with his Parliamentary duties, but at the end of ten years of the hardest kind of work at Whitefield's he relinquished his leadership, only, however, to give himself more untiringly to clamorous calls for his services. He felt especially the appeal of the Brotherhood Movement, and was planning as National President to give much time to its advocacy and to details of administration.

All through the years of active ministry he wielded a facile pen and many articles in newspapers and magazines bear witness to his literary fertility, while even more substantial and enduring in their influence are his valuable volumes, "A Popular History of the Free Churches," "A Modern Heretic," "A Story of the London Missionary Society," "The Ministry of the Modern Church," and "David Livingstone." His last and in many respects his noblest literary production was the Lyman Beecher lectures at Yale, to the preparation of which he devoted much time during the last year of his life, and which are embodied in this volume.

As preacher, organizer, publicist, author, pastor and friend, Silvester Horne did a work in his short life that in volume and quality made him one of the remarkable religious leaders of his age. And over and around everything that he did, touching it with enduring beauty, was the radiance of a pure, joyous and unselfish life.

Boston.

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LECTURE I

THE SERVANT OF THE SPIRIT

LECTURE I

THE SERVANT OF THE SPIRIT

I MUST begin the honourable task which your kind confidence has assigned to me by a simple and heartfelt acknowledgment of this high privilege. You have asked me to attempt an undertaking which can never have been an easy one, and which becomes measurably more difficult as the long sequence of volumes occupies shelf after shelf of our libraries. There were as you know humane laws under the old Hebrew dispensation in favour of those who had to toil for small reward as gleaners of the meagre residuum of the harvest-field after the more favoured harvesters had filled their barns to overflowing with grain of the earlier reaping. So far as I can see my predecessors have had little compassion on posterity. They never beheld my pathetic figure laboriously garnering the slender ears

they had overlooked, and submitting them for acceptance to a highly-critical market.

Nevertheless, if I cherish for my distinguished predecessors just a faint sentiment of envy, I trust I am able at the same time to perceive that they did not have all the good fortune. We are gleaning on a field where history is being made every year. The passage of the generations enhances the splendour of the retrospect, and, in proportion, the magnificence of the prospect. You have not invited me here to lecture on an obsolete art. This is not a funeral oration. The prophet is not on the point of being bowed out of the modern world. The progress of civilization may make some professions unnecessary. With the world-wide triumph of the Prince of Peace I take it the soldier will make his final salute to the nations; and I suppose even the lawyer may find existence somewhat precarious. Some of us look to see the enterprise at present associated with the manufacture and sale of injurious liquors and implements of war diverted to more wholesome channels.

Some trades and professions, it is clear, will die out as the kingdom of God comes to its own. But for every voice that carries inspiration to its fellows; for every soul that has some authentic word from the Eternal wherewith to guide and bless mankind, there will always be a welcome. No changes of the future can cancel the commission of the preacher. He does not hold that commission from any human society. He is the servant of the Spirit. He is not the creation of a state, or a municipality. Societies may organize and reorganize themselves as they will. They may make and unmake their officials. Some commonwealths have chosen to break with the tradition of kingship. Some have tried every form of military dictatorship and civil despotism; they have experimented with oligarchies, autocracies, and aristocracies. At times they have tried every form of government in swift succession. Possibly it is a wise thing that we should not cast our forms of national life in so rigid a mould. But in any case nobody would be bold enough to predict that this or that office

in the commonwealth is final and permanent; and may not be modified if society so decides. You remember Mr. William Watson's fine lines:

"The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer;
The grass of yesteryear
Is dead; the birds depart, the groves decay;
Empires dissolve, and peoples disappear:
Song passes not away.
Captains and conquerors leave a little dust
And Kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Cæsar they are less than rust;
The Poet doth remain."

Suppose Watson had said, the prophet rather than the poet? For the prophet is of older and nobler lineage, and his order includes all the children of inspiration whether they have kindled the soul of the world by speech or song. And I repeat, as society cannot commission a man to be a poet, even so it is beyond the authority of any state however powerful to create the prophet; aye, or to make his message false or barren, no matter how governors may growl, and throned iniquities fulminate. No human authority can

credit or discredit his words. His credentials are of superior authenticity. Let me state the position I propose to occupy in these lectures once for all, and at its highest. The preacher, who is the messenger of God, is the real master of society; not elected by society to be its ruler, but elect of God to form its ideals and through them to guide and rule its life. Show me the man who, in the midst of a community however secularized in manners, can compel it to think with him, can kindle its enthusiasm, revive its faith, cleanse its passions, purify its ambitions, and give steadfastness to its will, and I will show you the real master of society, no matter what party may nominally hold the reins of government, no matter what figurehead may occupy the ostensible place of authority.

Nor is the office of the preacher in the smallest danger of lapsing for lack of candidates. Our embarrassment arises from riches not from poverty. To-day everybody will preach to us and at us, whatever qualifications for the function they may have or

lack. Never was this old world sown so thick with pulpits. Never was heard in it such superabundance of gospels. Who that has ever read a modern newspaper will affirm again that the dogmatist is dead! Creeds jostle one another in the market-place and in the drawing-room; and their often harsh and hoarse prophets and prophetesses announce salvation and denounce judgment quite in the orthodox style. Hot-gospellers to-day are a prolific race; and some of the beliefs for which they woo and win converts speak volumes for the credulity of mankind.

It is astonishing what eagerness there is in our time to enter into competition with the conventional and orthodox pulpit, and to usurp its functions in dealing with the big human problems. Now it is the dramatist who is not content until he has converted the stage into a pulpit; now it is the journalist seeking to charm the public ear with some message that he believes to be vital to the common well-being; now it is the Socialist agitator, on his soap-box rostrum at the

street-corner, making capital out of the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of society, quite in the old prophet strain; now it is the novelist marshalling the forces of experience and imagination, and training all his guns on some citadel of real or fancied wrong; now it is the statesman converting the platform of political expediency into the pulpit of eternal principle; now it is the poet, or the prose essayist, setting our highest and wisest dreams of good to music and lifting up the eyes of fallible human nature to the hills whence cometh its strength. It must sometimes appear to us that humanity is a long-suffering, much-lectured creature, and that not we of the churches only but journalists, artists, politicians, novelists, playwrights conceive their fellow-men and women as sitting in pews, patient and defenseless, at the mercy of every would-be exhorter who has discovered that they are not so good as they should be.

Thomas Carlyle in his day expressed pity for humanity whose ears were thus besieged by armies of strident voices, in consequence

of which he, Thomas, lifted up his voice and shouted louder than all the rest. I confess to you I enjoy a quiet smile whenever the pessimists suggest that the vocation of the preacher is in danger of becoming obsolete. But I agree that God's order of preaching friars is a far wealthier society than some of us have recognized. America to-day will not forget to blazon upon the roll of her great nineteenth century preachers of righteousness the name of Abraham Lincoln as well as of Henry Ward Beecher; and Englishmen who are justly proud of Robert Hall and Thomas Binney, Dale and Spurgeon, cannot forget to number also among her national prophets Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin and John Bright.

And why not? It is no business of ours to belittle our calling. We hold no brief for any narrow and exclusive theory of preaching. Inspiration is not conditioned by a white tie or a Geneva gown. I am glad to have listened to truths as noble and as Christian on the floor of parliament as have ever been uttered under the dome of St. Paul's. The Gettysburg speech was the message of a prophet of

God, even if it was not divided into three heads and an application. No, we who call ourselves preachers enjoy no monopoly of the greatest of all arts, nor are we interested in establishing one. The spirit breatheth where it listeth. Nobody doubts that Amos was of us, though so far as I know he did not, as we say, preach regularly twice a Sunday. Ploughmen and herdsmen, carpenters, fishermen, tax-collectors and tent-makers, sons of German miners, Huntingdonshire farmers, and Kentucky backwoodsmen, each in his time and order, have received the divine afflatus, and therewith, the spiritual and moral leadership of mankind.

History it is true gives little space to this aspect of the progress of the race. Its canvas is crowded with uniforms, of kings and warriors and courtiers. The romance which the historian sees and describes to us is the romance symbolized by the banners, the martial music, and all the seductive pageantry of war. But the real romance of history is this romance of the preacher; the sublime miracle of the God-intoxicated soul

with vision of an eternal Will, and sense of an empire to which all continents, tongues, races belong. This man stands serene amid the clash of arms, and the foolish braggadocio of Force, asking only for the sword named Truth, for the harness of righteousness, and the spirit of peace. This is the world's unconquerable and irresistible Hero. All its most enduring victories are his. It is he who year after year, and generation after generation, in spite of rebuffs, defeats and disappointments, has planted the banner of the kingdom of justice, freedom and humanity on the conquered and dismantled fortresses of oppression, selfishness and wrong.

Do not think I am in danger of departing from the special object of these lectures if I strike this note at the outset. It will do us all good to realize *the catholicity and magnificence of our order.* It is well to realize that for justification of our existence we can make appeal to an universal instinct. We may well cherish our affinities. Our kith and kin is the mightiest family under God's heavens.

"Shakespeare was of us; Milton was for us;
Burns, Shelley were with us; they watch from their graves."

Certainly, no man was ever elect of God's spirit to be the mouthpiece of Christian righteousness who did not thereby confess himself one of us. The word "Sermon" has sometimes had an uninviting sound. It has not always been associated with the melting of the mists, and the vision of the infinite blue. Sometimes it is to be feared that it has made the mists more dense, impenetrable and chill. We are not so prejudiced as to deny the fact. But rightly understood mankind lives and grows on great sermons; and in no other way. Sublime thoughts, high and holy conceptions of life and death and duty, lofty interpretations of nature and experience, the light that reveals God upon the scene, and that dignifies and glorifies human nature —here is the substance of those great sermons that enter into men's souls and make them sons of God, and brothers of humanity.

Have any of us fathomed the depth of that

supreme saying of our Lord's that the real life of man is by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? Every word! The science of biogenesis is as comprehensive as that. The vital ingredients in our spiritual nurture are as manifold as that. Every word of God, in whatever language or dialect of the mother tongue of Deity, is endowed with this creative power. No single syllable of the Divine speech but has in it life-bearing, life-bestowing qualities. Even the inorganic creation is a mute evangelist. The God who uttered Himself in nature has decreed that its dumb lips should have their own peculiar eloquence. There are sermons in stones. In the rocks beneath our feet lie the hoarded histories of past millenniums. They are like ancient cinematograph films by means of which the marvellous procession of extinct existences passes before our wondering eyes, and stirs our sluggish imagination. Of course it is possible to watch the drama but to miss the meaning. But even Charles Darwin tracing the amazing progress of the universe, and linking up as he be-

lieved all sentient existences to their flower and consummation in the life of man, confessed that "at times there came over him with irresistible force the conviction that he had seen the Father." Then again, as he sadly confessed, he lost the vision.

But alas! there is nothing extraordinary in that experience. Because we make every use of Nature except to hearken to her sublimest message, it does not follow that she has lost her soul, and discarded her prophet's mantle. Only we are, as our fathers used to say, *gospel-hardened* to her words of truth and grace, and especially to their more secret and subtle meanings. Some day she will surprise us in a more sensitive and responsive mood, and show us in her mirror the very countenance of Deity, and we shall know that the place we stand on is holy ground. After all, Wordsworth's Peter Bell, sordid and vulgar, is not altogether false to the possibilities of life when he is represented as overwhelmed by a sudden revelation of Nature's inner glory; and the man to whom before

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose was to him
> And it was nothing more,"

looks into the heart of Nature's handiwork, hears a Voice commanding him to worship and believe, and becomes from that hour a changed man, awakened from moral and spiritual torpor.

A primrose in God's hands is text enough to shatter all our shallow agnosticisms, and reward our honest quest for the Eternal. "Whither can I go from Thy presence?" cries the psalmist with his poignant sense of the unescapable Preacher, who has freighted every atom of an infinite universe with Divine lessons, warnings, appeals and inspirations. "If I ascend into the heavens Thou art there; if I descend into hell behold Thou art there." Above the earth, the glittering heavens declare the glory of God; and beneath it the dark secrets of the underworld cannot be explored without Him. Somehow, you and I have been staged in an infinite theatre, every fragment of which represents some letter in the Divine caligraphy,

some note or tone in the ineffable oratorio music, in which the spheres sing the arias; and yet not an electron, infinitely minute, but has its part in the chorus. That is how we conceive it. The Universe is itself a great Bible, with the sublimest of all intelligible themes to set forth and illustrate, and with its myriads of worlds so many chapters expanding the one central and vital revelation, until by endless iteration, recapitulation and accumulation of evidence, the argument is established on which immortal souls can build an unconquerable faith.

I do not forget that there are many to whom the whole creation is inarticulate, and the universe eloquent of Nothing. To them the final achievement of our humanity is unconsciousness of God. The progress of the race is marked by the gradual unlearning of the spiritual lore of its childhood. Slowly but surely, one by one, every prophet voice is to be silenced, without and within. The solemn call to the human soul to recognize its origin and its destiny in God is to be heard no more. The worlds resolve them-

selves into masses of matter, many of them mere useless derelicts on the ocean of space. They cease to be the flaming manuscripts of the Eternal Wisdom, with their address to the conscience and reason of mankind. From this green earth the dews of inspiration are withered ; the bloom of its higher mystic beauty is fled. It becomes merely a ball of ponderable matter revolving aimlessly in unfathomable space ; the chance grave of innumerable generations of existence that once cherished the pathetic illusion that underneath them were Everlasting Arms.

The evolutionist, tracing the history of man, finds this astonishing phenomenon,— that once there dawned on man the consciousness of God, that the dawn ripened into the perfect day, and then that the light faded from the sky, and the human soul passed through the twilight of dubiety into the night of dark and sterile negation. The Universe will then become like some ruined and dismantled abbey or cathedral, once aglow with light and beauty, and, as it were, quivering with music, attesting its high heroic

human faith in God and man; but now with altar desolate and prostrate pulpit, and mouldering fabric, no longer a witness to the world of spirit, no longer a trysting-place between the human and the divine, no longer the sanctuary where the oracles of heaven are heard and tested and believed. That is what we are sometimes threatened with. Men may conceive the universe as a vast warehouse; but it will cease to be a church.

Over against such a possibility there is the undeniable fact that every fragment of creation is endowed with the preaching office, and man with a soul that cannot be insensitive to the universal appeal. Nor has he proved himself to be so. From a thousand immortal canvases he has uttered and still utters the truths with which Nature has indoctrinated him. He has made himself her expositor, her interpreter. Through him she has expressed her inner meaning. And not only by the artist's canvas but by the language of the poet we are admitted to the shrine where the *arcana* of Nature are communicated to us. The materialists who

flatter themselves that they are about to impoverish the universe of its idealism forget that they have not only to fight down the instinct of worship in every human breast, but to make war against all the supreme interpreters of Nature,—musicians, artists, poets and the rest—who saw into the heart of things with illuminated Vision, and dedicated their genius to proclaim what they saw. The significant fact is that every man is surrounded by the Voices that call to life; and that no one can ever be quite sure that he has closed every avenue through which divine appeals may reach his highest nature and start new processes of faith which may wholly change his character and his destiny

> "Just when we're safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides,
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears."

At any moment, in any place, we may find ourselves in church, at worship. The heart, so securely garrisoned, may be suddenly stormed. Before we know it we have made

the fateful concession, and thereby signed our capitulation. God has taken a text, and preached. We can say with the young prophet of long ago, "The angel came and waked me, as a man is waked out of sleep."

In all of this there is no suggestion that the office and function of the preacher can ever be superseded. Rather he has his roots in the nature of things, and can never cease to fulfill his mission until all the works of God cease to be eloquent of the love and wisdom of their Creator. It may be true that of late years mankind generally has been tempted to lay the accent on other instrumentalities. The State bulks more largely in the thought of the average man to-day than the Church does. The statesman and politician are, in the thought of our democracies, clothed with almost limitless powers for the betterment of human conditions. They have a very attractive and absorbing gospel to preach. Their sermons are of higher wages, better houses, the fairer distribution of wealth, and the shortening of the hours of labour.

Their sphere of action is this present life, with its urgent immediate needs; and just because their aim is avowedly to make this present world a better place to live in, they will never fail to find an audience.

You remember the sort of popular appeal that George Eliot put into the mouth of "Felix Holt, the Radical," when he took up his parable at the street corner against the churches and the parsons: "The aristocrats supply us with our religion like anything else and get a profit on it. They'll give us plenty of heaven. We may have *land* there. But we'll offer to change with them. We'll give them back some of their heaven, and take it out in something for us and for our children in this world." When things have gone wrong with us socially and industrially, preaching such as that makes many strings to vibrate in the average human breast. It is natural that the multitude should begin to fix their hopes on what governments can do for them, and should have but little patience with the evangelist who would hand to Lazarus, greedy for crumbs, a tract on the

bliss he will enjoy when he gets to Abraham's bosom. God forbid that I should deny that there is a suggestion of irony in talking of the bread of life to the physically starving, the raiment of righteousness to those in threadbare rags, and the mansions of the blessed to those living in garrets or cellars. Most of us do not believe, any more than Felix Holt did, that the purpose of religion is to reconcile us to the postponement of all comfort and all luxury until we pass into another world. No sane critic will ever accuse the Lord Christ of being indifferent to the physical well-being of the people.

But readers of George Eliot's famous story will remember that Felix Holt's social ministry was the result of a moral and spiritual crisis to which he confessed; and it had not occurred to him to enquire whence the impulse came prompting him to social service and political propagandism on behalf of the disinherited. "The angel came and waked me," said the young prophet Zechariah, and could give no clearer account. All he knew was that for years he had been in a state of

somnambulism—as one walking in his sleep. He had lived for the superficial, for the things of sense. The things of the spirit had been outside his consciousness. Then came the visitation—the influence of the higher ministry—and his soul awoke. You are familiar with Sant's popular picture of "The Soul's Awakening." The young girl has been reading in some book of vision; and now she is looking up with the aspect of one to whom Revelation has come, and who has found God and Life and Duty. When Zechariah was awaked, shaken out of sleep, and forced to open his eyes upon reality, we are told what it was that he saw. A new civilization! A city with streets in which the children played, and where the inhabitants grew old; where there was work for all and leisure for all. A city, too, built without walls, unarmed, unfortified, with open gates hospitable to all mankind, the symbol of peace and brotherhood.

This is the vision of an awakened youth. It is not unreal though it is as yet unrealized. On the contrary, it is the kind of vision

which ought to be a permanent endowment of every preacher's imagination. The one thing needful to make us prophets is an experience akin to that of Zechariah —the soul's awakening. Some angel of the Lord, some messenger from His Presence, some ministry of His Hands must wake us out of our sleep. Of this I am very sure—no preacher will thrill and move his generation who has not himself known this kindling of the soul. For it is "soul" the world needs. Everywhere to-day I hear the same complaint—that we are suffering from lack of soul. Art, they tell us, shows no falling off in skill of technique, but there is so little soul in modern pictures. Music is the same; the great composers have left no successors. Poetry died out in the nineteenth century. It is the same in other spheres. The employer complains that his workmen put no soul into their work. The workman retorts that industries to-day are managed for the most part by companies; and companies are well enough called "bodies" of men, but they are bodies with-

out souls. Even the pulpits of the world, I hear it said, are occupied by those who unite to a chaste style a well-furnished mind, and a genius for criticism and analysis; but somehow there is little soul, and the winds of heaven do not sweep over the spirits of their audience as in days gone by.

All this may be exaggerated. I suspect it is. But nobody can question that there is a measure of truth in it. And here, remember, is something that no parliaments or congresses can do. Here governments are impotent. If they could put money in every one's pocket, a good roof over every one's head, and the best clothes on every one's back; still they could not put a soul of faith and love in every one's breast. Here the preacher has really no competitor. There is something in the living voice of the true prophet that thrills us as nothing else can. We may be rich and increased with goods and yet have need of everything. Poverty is not the most fatal enemy of empires. The great empires of yesterday did not go to their ruin because of any lack of wealth

They were on the contrary enervated by luxury. They perished, like Hamlet's father, "full of bread." They declined and fell for lack of "soul." Where there is no "vision" the people perish. The appearance of a true preacher is the greatest gift that any nation can have. By his presence, and his spirit, he multiplies the fighting forces for righteousness indefinitely. John Knox's voice was as the sound of a trumpet. When Luther rode to Worms, every timid believer in the Reformation plucked up heart to speak and act more boldly. When Cromwell arrived on Marston Moor, the historian tells us that a great shout went up in the Puritan camp which was the presage of victory. It was more. It *was* victory. What Washington and Lincoln were to your own heroic fathers in their day of trial, men of faith, men of soul, men of God, are to all hard-pressed Christian causes and all humane enterprises. It is this force that we call "soul" that is the motive-power of all progress; that turns all the wheels that ever *do* turn to any noble purpose. "The words that I speak

unto you," said Jesus, "they are soul." As a mere matter of fact He has kept the soul of the world alive. As John Morley wrote many years ago, "The spiritual life of the West has burned during all these centuries with the pure flame first kindled by the sublime Mystic of the Galilæan Hills."

This is our business—the business which all the parliaments of the world are powerless to transact. I might have called the subject of these lectures, in which I hope to review some of the more notable preaching exploits of history, "Keeping the soul of the world alive." I have preferred to call it "The Romance of Preaching." Frankly, I fear that in these modern days we have been losing our sense of the splendid possibilities of our vocation. The thought of it does not thrill us. We do not go down to our work as we should, with our hearts beating high for the wonder and the hope of the adventures. We tend to become slaves to the routine of it. Once we were alive in the age of miracles. By "the vision splendid" we were "on our way attended." But the beauty

is off the morning sky, the glow of the dawn is past. We have

> "seen it die away
> And fade into the light of common day."

There is no tragedy in all the world like the disillusioned minister. He has to keep on preaching. His congregation is often weary; but no one is so heavy of heart as he is. "What a genius I was," cried Swift, "when I wrote that book!" referring to a work of his early prime. Millais, in the presence of a collection of the pictures representative of the splendid idealism of his youth, burst into tears and rushed out of the building. Somehow, so many of us are strangers to the truth of Paul's affirmation that "experience worketh Hope." So many have gathered doubt and even despondency as the fruit of that tree. So we begin to envy other men their tasks. The physician who with reverent hands and spirit repairs the temple of the body; the lawyer who serves the ideals of justice; the statesman who helps to rear the fabric of a nation's

prosperity or a world's peace; the explorer and the engineer who between them prospect and build the roads for a higher civilization —all these we begin to believe are following the gleam with nobler ambitions and to a more glorious goal.

That, in part, is why youth does not rally to the call of the ministry to-day, and why the preacher's face is all too often in the shadow. The time has surely come to sound another note. Who should be proud of their calling if not we? What other history has ever equalled ours? Think of the procession of the preachers! No range of mountains has been high enough to stay their progress; no rivers deep and broad enough to daunt them; no forests dark and dense enough to withstand their advance. No poet has ever sung the epic of their sacrifices. Was ever such a romance? Was ever love exalted to so pure a passion? Was ever in the human soul so unquenchable a fire? Silver and gold they had none. They did not seek to win mankind by materialistic gifts. Such as they had they gave. The alms they distributed

were faith, hope, love. Wherever they went they trod a pilgrim road, and flung forth their faith, often to a sceptical and scornful generation. But what heeded they? They passed onward from frontier to frontier, "the legion that never was counted," and, let us add, that never knew defeat.

Gradually before their message, ancient pagan empires tottered, heathen despots bowed the head, in the lands of Goth and Vandal stately cathedrals reared their splendid towers and spires, and the battle music of the Christian crusade rang triumphantly in chiming bells and pealing organs over conquered races. In the recesses of Indian forests, up the dark rivers of Africa and South America that often flowed red, along the frozen coast of Greenland and Labrador, the pioneer preachers made their pilgrimage. Let every village preacher who climbs into a rude rostrum, to give out a text and preach a sermon to a meagre handful of somewhat stolid hearers, remember to what majestic Fraternity he belongs, and what romantic traditions he inherits. He, too, is the servant

of the spirit. He, too, does his work in the land of Romance. Many modern influences have tried to kill the consciousness of this truth. Even the churches do not always allow us to realize it. Materialism and rationalism would fain lay sacrilegious hands upon our task, and secularize it. But the true Prophet has that within his soul which no external adversaries can destroy.

"I see my call! It gleams ahead
Like sunshine through a loophole shed!
I know my Task; these demons slain
The sick earth shall grow sound again;—
Once let them to the grave be given,
The fever-fumes of Earth shall fly!
Up, Soul, array thee! Sword from thigh!
To battle for the heirs of Heaven!"

LECTURE II

THE FIRST OF THE PROPHETS

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THE FIRST OF THE PROPHETS

THE Prophet stood in the old world as a mysterious and romantic figure, played upon by strange and sublime lights, his speech charged with subtle meanings, his life commissioned out of the supernatural for surprising and perilous errands. His is by far the most arresting figure in the Old Testament. When he takes the stage all other actors are dwarfed. If he is not there, time itself seems to wait for his appearance. Prince and priest alike are insignificant in his majestic presence. In his highest exemplars both his words and his deeds are memorable. His interventions, his appearances mark the crises of history. His words set the standard of thought for generations. With the people he is by no means always popular. He has no genius for smooth speech. He flatters neither monarch nor mob; and nations have seldom loved the

uncompromising truth. He appears on the canvas of Holy Writ as the clear-sighted enemy of powerful, selfish, vested interests; and the passages are yet to be discovered in which he pronounces blessing on the rich. The language he holds is scathing and passionate; and in many cases the denunciations are more frequent than the consolations. Mr. Matthew Arnold would perhaps have called the prophet a Philistine; but imagination fails to conceive what the prophet would have called Mr. Matthew Arnold.

But whatever be the type of mission and of personality, the prophet dominates the life of his time. Wherever and whenever he appears men's souls are stirred, and there is a shaking of the dry bones. We realize that he awes even the worldly-minded. He fixes men's thoughts on serious issues. He rebukes their triviality and flippancy. He brings a breath of reality into ordinary conversation. He confronts the careless and frivolous with the claims of the Eternal. We realize, too, that the great prophets had a genius for the unexpected and the unconventional. They

ignored tradition. They were fiery iconoclasts, intolerant of illusions however fashionable. They had no excessive respect for the orthodoxy so-called of the rigid schools of the Rabbis. Of ceremonies and ordinances as you know they were apt to speak with very slight respect. The tendency of religion in all ages to stereotype its forms and formulas was viewed by the prophets as an insidious evil. Thus it was never long before they had arrayed against them all those who were keenly interested in the preservation of the old order of things. For the prophet was always and everywhere a reformer, zealous to reconstruct life as it is so that it might more perfectly express the will of God.

You will bear this in mind also, that even when the people believed but little in their prophet, the true prophet never faltered in his belief in the people. He knew their souls were soil adapted to the seed. He knew that they were capable of all the aspirations and all the heroisms which they habitually professed to despise. He knew that their agnosticism was superficial, and their contempt

of idealism a pose. Let any genuine voice reach them and thrill them, or let some great crisis shatter their slumbers, and their affectations, and all the inferior creeds would go down before the resistless tide of spiritual feeling. Unless there is in men and women this capacity of re-birth the preacher's work everywhere is vain ; we may as well dismantle our pulpits, and recognize that human progress is a delusive hope. So Thomas Carlyle exclaims concerning the European Reformation: "Nations are benefited, I believe, for ages by being thrown into divine white heat in this manner, and no nation that has not had such divine paroxysms at any time is apt to come to much." The preacher, it is true, may feel himself to be, in the beginning, only a voice crying in the wilderness, but he also believes that the desert can rejoice and blossom as the rose. That is to say, he believes that actual desert is potential Eden ; and that all that is needed to effect the miracle is the coöperant forces of what we describe as the Sun of Righteousness and the Water of Life.

This inspired visionary, with his radiant belief in transfigured deserts,—in sandy and barren wastes gay with lilies and roses—is surely the very insuppressible hero of Romance. He walks the mean streets and dreary paths of modern industrial districts, with the same high confidence that lighted the face of Isaiah amid the desert of commercialized Judaism, in the unspiritual environment of ancient Babylon. For he believes in his people; he is sure of his audience. It is nothing to him that they do not believe in themselves. It is nothing to him that the soil to be cultivated is so heavy and obstinate a clay, or so barren a waste. The more unpromising the material, the more smiling is his prevision of success. This, surely, is the element of futurity about the prophet's message which has often been fiercely debated. He is more than a forth-teller. He *is* a fore-teller. He does "dip into the future." It is given to him to see the end from the beginning. More certainly than the scientist with boasted precision can dogmatize on the ultimate product in the total process of cause and effect, the prophet fore-

sees and foretells the inevitable transformations that will be produced upon the desert of unbelief and unrighteousness, by the operation of the Divine Spirit.

But let us leave these generalizations and make a more close and detailed study of the first great master of the art of the prophet as he is portrayed for us in the Book of Exodus. To those who frankly disbelieve that the message of God to man is even more than the call to personal regeneration, and who are aghast at the idea of the preacher being made the instrument of popular liberty and social reconstruction, the mission and message of Moses must be the source of endless difficulty. On what theory they rely for explaining away this man and his work I have no notion. But to the candid student who holds no brief for, or against, any particular theory, the story of Moses is surely one of the most luminous and thrilling in human history.

I need not dwell here on the romantic circumstances of his preservation from death, and his transfer from the hovel of the slave to the palace of the Pharaoh. His education

is more to the point. Do not fail to note that the Scripture assumes that it belonged to the will and purpose of Providence that this first great Hebrew prophet should be instructed in all the lore of the Egyptians. There was no prejudice against what is sometimes derided as pagan or classical culture. Familiarity with the thoughts and imaginations of great men is taken as an invaluable preparation for the preacher's work, even when these thinkers belong to a very different school of religious philosophy. Like the apostle Paul, his mental powers are trained and disciplined in the wisdom of the ancients, but his personality and his experience are his own; and so far as we can see, he is never in any danger of surrendering his personality or depreciating his experience.

His nearest successor in modern times was John Wesley whose whole preaching was coloured by his classical learning, who abounded in illustrations drawn from the ancients, and yet the originality of whose spiritual experience was the secret of his unique influence over his generation. It can

never be necessary in this atmosphere to protest against any and every theory that makes light of an educated ministry, and that assumes that Providence prefers to let loose upon an unsophisticated generation the man of undisciplined mind. I shall have more to say on this subject when I come to deal with the Romance of Evangelism. But for the present let me lay it down that there is nothing in Holy Writ to warrant the assumption that a man is likely to be more spiritual if he is an ignoramus ; or that prophetic power in the pulpit especially attaches to the preacher whose heart is full and whose head is empty. Knowledge is really not a disqualification for the ministry ; neither is there any incompatibility between the seer and the scholar. Because Festus chose to assume that much learning had made Paul mad, we need not be seriously afraid that a similar cause will be likely to produce that effect in us. That Moses brought to his great democratic task a finely trained, balanced and disciplined intellect was of immeasurable value to him, and gave him at once a portion of personal as-

cendency when he came to deal with those whose misfortune it was, that they had been deprived of his advantages.

But on the most vital point of all, the Scripture narrative is emphatic. No weight of learning, no insight into alien creeds, and no increase of social prestige injured his humanity. In the court atmosphere that he breathed, and under the tuition of the Egyptian scholars, he did not lose his capacity for indignation, his passionate hatred of oppression and love of liberty. Neither did his own prosperity make him forgetful of those who were the victims of cruelty, and apparently in the grip of an inexorable fate. His eulogists were wont to celebrate the meekness and patience of his later days. But I do not think I am wrong in saying that in every true prophet there is something volcanic. Well is it for all of us when our primal instincts remain intact, however thoroughly we may master the lessons of self-control. Moses in his young manhood betrays the depths of his humanity—his elemental hatred of oppression ; but I ask you to observe that

when he fled from the consequences of his own rough blow struck for justice and freedom, he is guided to a solitude where he might think out his problem. For the problem was not only to avenge one wrong but to destroy the system that authorized the wrong. After all it was a poor thing merely to strike down the agent of Pharaoh's tyranny. The war Moses had to wage was against the throned iniquity, the entrenched and panoplied injustice that had behind it all the force of organized authority, and all the glamour of a throne. In other words, the problem for this Man of destiny was how to end an iron despotism and substitute an order of justice, freedom and humanity. No preacher into whose soul God's light has penetrated will ever content himself with seeking the deliverance of the individual, so long as systems of wrong are allowed to stand which have issue, generation after generation, in the demoralization of human nature, and the consequent perpetuation of injustice.

The next stage in the ordeal of Moses may

be described as his fight against his destiny. For it has always been true that God's best ministers take up their commission under a sense of compulsion. They cannot easily believe that this awful and sublime call is to them. They are conscious of no capacity in their nature equal to so tremendous a vocation. They are driven out on to these great waters, where the Divine business is to be done, under stress of storm. It needs the utter maximum of revelation to convince us that we are actually the elect of God for tasks so mighty. Like Moses, we plead nature's bar, and cry "Impossible!" "O Lord, I am not eloquent. . . . And the Lord said, Who hath made man's mouth, is it not I the Lord?" Science has laboured in our time to make a Gospel out of natural selection. But this Gospel of supernatural election is a greater one. God's miracles are wrought by those who, in spite of themselves, do the humanly impossible.

You remember a passage in one of Mr. Augustine Birrell's essays in which he reminds us that the poet Gray longed to be a

soldier; he wrote the immortal elegy but he took no Quebec; General Wolfe took Quebec, and with his latest breath declared he would rather have written Gray's elegy. Not natural selection, but divine election! Frederick William Robertson broke his heart because he might not be a soldier; and was constrained into the office of prophet by influences he could not comprehend. Yet, so coerced in spirit, he preached; and did more than any other of his time to create a new birth of faith. Not natural selection but supernatural election. Strange as it seems, and paradoxical, God's noblest warriors have felt like pressed men. Said a young fellow once before a college committee when asked why he wanted to enter the ministry, "Because all other ambitions went down before the revelation of life in Christ." The other ambitions *have* to go down. The one and only ambition that is big enough to overwhelm all others has to master and possess the preacher. I know nothing in history more impressive than the resistless way in which God urges His claims; how He seems

to shut in the man to the task, and sweep away his objections and hesitations like chaff before the wind.

> "So nigh is grandeur to the dust,
> So near is God to man,
> When Duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'
> The soul replies, 'I can.'"

It is that determinative "thou must" that lies behind the consecrated audacity of the prophet, and lends strange fire to his words.

Surely there is no prayer more appropriate to any one who feels the inner urging of the spirit towards the office of the preacher than the famous one of Augustine—"O God, give what Thou commandest and then command what Thou wilt." When we are ready to cry out with Moses, "I cannot go, I have not the gift, I should only bring dishonour upon the cause," the answer is, "The gift is in the good pleasure of the Giver." Certain it is He will send no man on any errand of His, without the ability to discharge it.

Yet this diffidence on the threshold is surely

a sign of grace. We notice it not only in Moses but in Jeremiah, in Zechariah and in Paul. They require to be convinced that they are not being tempted to build the most responsible and difficult of all lives on mere raw impulse. They are resolved to hold no illusions as to their own character and capacity. They weigh, and measure up, their powers and talents with scrupulous exactitude. They disguise none of their deficiencies. They do full justice to the magnitude of the work required of them. Then with genuine humility they object their insufficiency for the task. Only men who have approached the ministry in this spirit have had their souls and wills purged from the alloy of false and base ambitions. But at the last, Moses is made to see that his mistrust of self and his fear of failure, alike spring from an imperfect knowledge of God and partial surrender to His will. The one thing lacking in the special education of Moses for the crisis in history which he has to handle is Revelation. The solution of Israel's social problem lies precisely where the solutions of

all social troubles lie,—in the knowledge of God and of His will.

It is this experience to which the next chapter in his education is sacred. The special gift that is to fit him for his ambassadorship is God's revealed secret to him—a new knowledge of God which former generations had not known, nor needed to know, but which was revealed to him, Moses, because without it he could not accomplish his task. It is well to take note of the actual words as they are given us in the Book of the Exodus. The passages are gathered from two chapters. To the petition of Moses for new light on the nature of God the answer is, "I AM hath sent thee"; and it dawns on this young Liberator that this mystic message contains a new truth of pregnant meaning—"I am the Lord; I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the name of God Almighty but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them." This spiritual crisis in the personal preparation of the prophet for his work is worthy of your attention. By some flash of inner light he is conscious of out distancing the greatest of

his predecessors. Some new conviction is burned into his brain. He is literally on fire with a new ideal.

"O glory of the lighted mind,"

exclaims Mr. Masefield's converted hero in "The Everlasting Mercy." There is no glory equal to it. In that hour Moses became a seer, and stands illuminated with the glory of the lighted mind.

In the first place it is a great thing to know by actual verification that *Revelation is progressive.*

"Each generation learned
Some new word of that great Credo which in prophet hearts has burned
Since the first man stood God-conquered with his face to Heaven upturned."

It is one thing to believe that as a theological proposition; it is quite another thing to know its truth in some hour of exalted vision. This is the very soul of religion. It thrills us in those majestic words which form the stately exordium of the Epistle to the Hebrews,

"God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these latter days spoken unto us by His Son." "God hath spoken." This is the life of truth. God hath spoken to *us*. The Divine word has become cogent and pertinent to our life and our need. Something of the infinite reserve of truth has been specially disclosed for our enlightenment. We are not the disciples of a closed canon. Do not the astronomers tell us that we live in so splendid and spacious a physical universe that not a year passes but the light from some new star, some effluence out of the Infinite, reaches our world and adds to our perception of the wealth of the Eternal? And are we to suppose that the spiritual universe is less august? and that those rays that speak of realities old as the worlds yet new to our ken, may not reach our souls to-day, and continue to illumine with fresh radiance the spirits of the generations yet unborn? We are the heirs of progressive revelation. We are admitted to know secrets withheld from the knowledge of our

sainted sires. We are always knowing God. To know Him is the life which is life indeed.

The special revelation that lighted the mind of Moses and made him a prophet lay in the name of God—the I AM, the Eternal Presence; or as Dr. Fairbairn more truly phrases it, "He who causes to be." This is the Vision of the Immanent Deity without whom there is no existence and no progress; and who has not made either the world or humanity but is ever making them. This is the Vision of the Will that rolls through all things, moulding and making all that is. The soul that is one with that Will is lifted above fear and failure. For him the Present is alive with God; and the Future is forever with Him. That is the faith with which to conquer the hell of slavery; that is the vision to give hope and patience to the Reformer whose business it is not only to deliver the people's bodies from bondage but their souls from the curse of captivity. "*I Am* hath sent thee." It is not very far from that revelation to the central Christian faith—Emmanuel, God with us.

Here then is our man, the first in the august line of the prophetical succession, one who of his own choice espouses the cause of a suffering people, who for the sake of the enslaved and oppressed eats the bread of exile and servitude, who by Divine constraint takes up the sacred but thankless task of liberator, and becomes the mouthpiece of the will of God alike to tyrant monarch and depraved multitude. He is the servant and spokesman of "Him who causes to be." On that revelation of the Divine purpose and co-operation he relies, and under the inspiration of it he rises to a sublime height. He sees that the social revolution without which national emancipation cannot be achieved lies within the will and power of Him who causes to be. Henceforth Moses is a "God-intoxicated" man. But so far from being a visionary, his spiritual illumination confers practical insight and the wisdom of statesmanship. He has not only to persuade a dark, degraded and discouraged people that their social misery is not irremediable nor their spiritual despair indestructible if only faith in God revives in

their breasts; but he has somehow to lead them up from the depths of servitude and fashion for them a religious and social system which shall incorporate and express the new revelation of God and His will.

I need not tell you that our inspired prophet was no infallible pope. As we have seen he was the disciple of progressive revelation, and just as he saw truths about God that had been concealed from his fathers, so the generations to come would outgrow the Mosaic system in the light of a still purer and humaner revelation. Something of the harshness and inhumanity of the heathenism from which his race had emerged betrays itself in many of his statutes. But it is not the man's limitations that astonish us, but his almost incredible height of wisdom and humanity, standing where he did. And one supreme conviction masters him. God must rule the whole life of man. Nothing that is human must ever lie outside the divine governance. That is why he brings the will of God to bear on the minutest details not only of worship, but of conduct.

The wonder of the Mosaic legislation is not in the provision of the tabernacle and the elaborate system of symbol by means of which he designed to teach a people of very rudimentary religious education the spiritual and moral truths he himself had grasped; the wonder of the Mosaic legislation is in the new social and economic order that it created, and the moral code that was to hold therein. First, in the Decalogue, he not only sweeps away by solemn enactment all polytheism and idolatry, but all external temptations thereto. Then he provides by law for one day's rest in seven for everybody. Then he lends the sanction of religion to that respect due to parents which is the key to a wholesome family life. Then he legislates against murder, adultery, theft and scandal, and even ventures to lay the divine law upon the thoughts and imaginations of the heart by a statute against those envious desires which are the source of so many deeds of unjust aggrandizement.

So much for the Decalogue. But there follows, as you know, the most elaborate and

interesting series of statutes, dealing with various classes of labour, menservants and maidservants, for whom a whole charter of rights, exemptions and privileges is devised. He faces problems as to the responsibility of those who are the unwitting cause of injury to others. He is rigorous against usury. He safeguards the position of the "foreigner," and enjoins hospitality. He deals with the appointment of judges and decrees the punishment for perjury. He sketches the system of land tenure and asserts the original and inalienable proprietorship of God. He has a good deal to say as to the conduct of war, and while his words are in places dark and fearful, we have nevertheless in his statute the first attempt ever made to humanize war and moderate some of its consequences. His agrarian legislation includes details as to the cultivation of vineyards, and methods of ploughing. He even condescends to the character and quality of clothing that is appropriate to the life of the people; and again and again he throws the shelter of Divine authority about the life and

fortune of the poor, the infirm and the "stranger"; as well as around the dumb beasts that are the servants of mankind.

Perhaps I may be allowed to interpolate here that my argument is scarcely, if at all, affected by the most advanced criticism, assigning much that has been included in the code of Moses to a later date. It is really a question of the foundation tradition of a great people. The prophet comes upon the scene as the herald of a theocracy. His soul is alive with faith in the kingdom of God. He sees that government by God's will means not only the acceptance of certain beliefs, and the performance of certain acts of worship, but the observance of certain ethical obligations, and the organization of a certain social order. The tradition of the Hebrew nation was, from henceforth, that its state was founded by its first prophet; that its first statesman and legislator was one who received his ideals in communion with God upon the Mount of Vision. No one can wonder that the successors of Moses in the great prophetical line were similarly endowed by

the spirit for momentous political errands. Hence Samuel crowns and discrowns kings. Elijah, flying from life and duty to Horeb, hears commanding words bidding him return to the thick of the human fray "and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria and Jehu the son of Nimshi to be king over Israel." So he, too, becomes the instrument of political revolution, and the mouthpiece of the creed that the Lord God cares how the people are governed, and that His sovereignty remains unaffected by the particular mode of government that may obtain at any time and in any land. This then is the conception alike of the work of the preacher, and of the ideal constitution of a people that we derive from the Old Testament; and as I hope to be able to show you in later lectures, it is not modified by any teaching or practice that we owe to the New Testament. The whole problem of good government is how to give effect to the ideal of the kingdom of God. The problem of bad government lies in the men who have lost sight of that ideal.

I think we may spare a few more thoughts for the problem of how God made His first great prophet—the leader of that hero race whose deeds and words belong to the unperishable glories of the world. You and I come to our consideration of this man with questions in our minds which we shall have to answer, and in regard to which people will look to us for guidance. Yet these questions only differ in degree from those that tortured the soul of Moses and inspired his sacrifice and devotion. He became the man he was because he saw the two extremes of life, its luxury and its misery, its cruel indefensible inequalities. I sometimes think no man is qualified to be a preacher at all into whose soul that iron has not entered. We may state our economic beliefs to-day in more scientific terms than Moses could. But do we feel as much as he did what the actual facts mean? Do we realize the poignancy of the contrast? It was the great advantage of this embryo prophet that he lived in both worlds; he knew the *want* at one end of the social scale and the *waste* at the other. He

saw that the pomp and splendour of the court of the Pharaohs was all sweated out of the unpaid labour of the toilers. He saw the inside organization of a vast tyranny which kept multitudes in poverty that a few might revel in luxury and idleness. He saw the scorn and contempt of the exploiters of industrialism for those on whose labour they lived. He saw all these things; and according to a modern pietistic school, he would have done his duty if he had simply preached the existence of God, and had taken no step to break up this iniquitous order and give freedom and justice to the people. Fortunately for the Israelites he did not read his destiny and duty so.

It is no business of mine to suggest what subjects should be included in the curriculum of a college where men are in training to be preachers. The day will come, I suspect, when a course of instruction on social conditions will be a part of the normal education of every minister of religion. But desirable and important as that is, you cannot nourish the spirit and passion of a Moses simply on a

diet of political economy and social statistics. What counts is actual experience of the cruelties and miseries of an organized society where unbridled prodigality at the top, is balanced by indescribable poverty at the bottom. The course of study I would fain include in the curriculum of every modern school of the prophets would be conducted in a tenement district, or some area where men and women live—or exist—doing unending tasks for starvation wages. If to that could be added a brief course of study of the actual lives of the wealthy dilettantists and neurotics who make up so large a portion of what is called Society, we should breed a race of prophets who would be our leaders in a new exodus towards a new land of promise.

When the great masses of our peoples are made to understand that our preachers are those who know the inwardness of their life and lot, and have entered into close brotherhood with them to champion their right to fullness of life and opportunity, then faith will revive in our lands even as we read in the time of Moses, " And the people believed, for

when they saw that the Lord had visited His children, and had seen their afflictions, then they bowed their heads and worshipped."

Somewhere in your literature I have read the story of a scene after one of the battles of your Civil War. The rude hospital was crowded and the surgeons were busy with their instruments of pain. And in the midst of all the anguish and agony there stood a fair young girl who had devoted herself to the task of nursing. The turn of one of the wounded men had come, and his operation had to be faced. He said he thought he could bear it if the lady would come and hold his hand. And she went where he lay, and held his hand; watched the cold beads stand out on his brow; and gathered up into her heart all his suffering and pain. If the world bears its sorrow and miseries to-day with some measure of faith and fortitude it is because the Lord Christ has stood, during these centuries, by the bedside of a suffering Humanity and held its hand, and gathered into His Divine heart its pain, its grief, and its sin.

Remember, there is no cheaper way than this to bring about a revival of faith. Faith is often crushed out of the hearts of people by harsh and unjust social conditions. It is not unnatural that the victims of these conditions should argue from man's inhumanity to man either that the God who permits it is indifferent, or that there is no God since He does not intervene. It is little use to go to such as these and preach the theory of religion. Theology is a fascinating subject, but the formula has yet to be invented that will satisfy the souls of those who are suffering under the cruel lash of injustice, and who are the prisoners of circumstance. Some one must go to them who by his own life of brotherhood and practical sympathy will interpret to them God's redeeming purposes. Some one must do what Moses did for the Israelites—consecrate his sympathy, his sagacity, and his energy to the task of deliverance, and the substitution of the right for the wrong, which is the eternal world-task at which all must labour.

The Old Testament introduces us broadly

to two orders of preachers. Of the one Elijah is the type — the uncompromising individualist, remote, inaccessible, ascetic. Ever and anon he descends from his solitudes to thunder his denunciations against an apostate age. But he knows little of the people, or of the time. He is apt to exaggerate his loneliness in righteousness. He thinks the whole land has gone after Baal while all the time there are seven thousand non-conformists. But his courage, and his austerity make him a power. The people gaze with awe upon his face, even though they look with relief upon his back. This is a great type of preacher; but I question whether it is the type that is most welcome, or most potent. Elijah was succeeded by Elisha; and the young disciple who received for endowment a double portion of the old preacher's spirit dedicated himself to a totally different type of ministry. He was a homely, friendly man, whose place was in the hearts and homes of the people.

Think of the facts about him as we know them. The Shunammite woman knew him

as the one man in the land who would understand what the loss of her lad meant to her. The young prophets, eager to erect their new house, put their arms around him, and said, "Be content, and go with us." If they had acted like that to Elijah, I do not know which would have been the more uncomfortable party, the old prophet or the young probationers. When the widow of a young preacher comes to Elisha, he reads her tragedy in shrewd human fashion. "What hast thou in the house?" he asks, and she answers pathetically, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house, save a pot of oil." When the Shunammite woman returned after the famine to find her lands alienated, he made himself at once her champion, and faced the king with the demand, "Restore to her her lands, and the fruits since the day she left." This is the new order of ministry. It is human, social, sympathetic. Elisha knows how people live, enters into their joys, shares their ambitions, instinctively discerns their privations, and will not see them defrauded of their rights. Both orders of

ministry may have their place; but I believe that the future will largely be the inheritance of the latter. We are returning in thought and feeling in these latter days to the ideal which lies behind the Book of the Exodus, and which is reflected in the renunciation, the practical sympathy, the strenuous and sagacious leadership, and the code of moral and social legislation, of the first of the Prophets.

LECTURE III

THE APOSTOLIC AGE

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THE great succession of the Hebrew prophets came to its conclusion and consummation in John the Baptist. He was of the school of Elijah. He practiced rigorous austerities. By his mode of life he evidenced the contempt in which he held the fashionable habits and ambitions of the day. The simplicities and severities of his existence harmonized well with the type of ministry to which he knew himself elect. It might appear from the substance of his preaching that he knew more of the necessity for repentance and reform than of the secret of regeneration. But however that may be he had no new vision of God ; and his greatness lay in the sublime humility with which he pointed the people away from himself to One who had the new Gospel that was to regenerate humanity and change the world. Yet John's preaching when he descended

from the mountain solitudes to the fords of Jordan is worthy of your study. He was one of those fearless and clear-sighted souls who by his own utter sincerity, spiritual discipline and sacrificial life, had earned the right to strip society of its shams, expose and denounce its sins, and generally become its conscience in a way that only the most absolutely disinterested and single-minded men can ever dare to do.

I have said there was nothing exactly new in his ministry. His call to repentance was as old as the race. The spirit and forms of asceticism were not rare among his predecessors. His indifference to the materialistic aims on which most men's hearts were set was a genuine note of prophethood, but by no means unique. John's significance lies first of all in his sense of the nearness of the Messianic kingdom for which the ages had been in travail; and secondly, I think, in a very deep and true view of the social evils which had sprung from the corruption of religion. His first movement is to fling down a challenge to the ecclesiastical leaders be-

cause they had imbibed the worst vices of a self-constituted aristocracy. The senseless pride in blood and lineage, the perilous illusion, "We have Abraham for our father," had blinded them to reality and wrought their spiritual ruin. John's sane soul recognized the fatal error and folly which have so often been used to buttress up vast and illusive claims whether of ancestral descent or spiritual succession; and with the courage and frankness of the true preacher he smote his sword through this web of lies. "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham," he cried; and with that sharp final epigram, the whole baseless fabric of an artificial spiritual aristocracy crumbled to the dust.

Then he turned to the mixed multitude, who were asking to be shown their way of life, with a command which proved him as resolute to teach equality to them as to the religious magnates whom he had just humbled. "He that hath two coats let him impart to him that hath none," he cried, and left them to digest that unwelcome counsel of

socialism as best they could. The revenue-raisers came next, and the Word of God in the person of John was heard for the first time in the New Testament in denunciation of "graft." This thunderbolt was followed swiftly by another when he flamed out against the military oppression and coercion which in Palestine was only typical of the age-long crucifixion of Right at the hands of Might. With a final affirmation that to end this reign of Wrong, and establish the Kingdom of Righteousness, One mightier than he was needed, and was on the way, John ended one of the shortest and most scathing sermons of which there is any record. On that mighty canvas of history where the figure of the Preacher is incomparably the most romantic of all, is there any more heroic and pathetic personality than this son of the desert with his ascetic frame and soul of fire, bringing his ministry to a consummation in a sublime act of self-effacement, and with courage unquenched turning his back on all scenes of popularity, and setting his face like a flint to a dungeon and a scaffold?

I am now to invite you to concentrate your thought on the amazing era of apostolic preaching which followed the death and resurrection of our Lord, and of which the new vision of God that broke over the souls of the first disciples was the creative cause. It is common ground among the historians that this which we call the apostolic age is the Romance of all history. The story is of a dozen inspired workmen, who were lifted by an ineffable experience out of the deepest depths of humiliation and shame to serene heights of faith, whence they went forth to write the incomparable epic of world-conquest. There are no words in any language that can express how dear they held their faith and how cheap they held their lives. In all the instrumentalities on which we too often rely to win our victories they took no stock. They knew nothing of art, architecture, or music, nor for the most part did they reck much of education. They met the mailed hand of Rome unarmed and defenseless. With no material weapon, no organized army, no display of force, they shook the

mightiest of world empires till it trembled and tottered. From the handful of recreant apostles who in the crisis of His fate had failed their Leader, sprang the invincible legion that did not know the meaning of fear, and that, to use the words of one of our own Puritan fathers in exile, "triumphed over cruelty with courage, over persecution with patience and over death itself by dying." Rome had conquered every race, and trampled upon every creed only to be baffled by men whose bodies she could burn but whose hate she could not provoke; nay, whose love she could not alienate. When the sand of the Colosseum was red with their blood; when in Nero's gardens, converted into torches, they passed through smoke and flame to their rest, their message swept in triumph from convert to convert; while in the subterranean seclusion of the catacombs the martyr missionaries preached and prayed and signed the galleries of Death with the symbols of eternal Hope.

But before I come to some illustrations of this heroic age, there is a preliminary question to which I must attempt an answer.

Let me ask what was the new Revelation that fired men's souls with such sublime faith and fortitude? What was the new music that was to enchant its disciples and render them insensitive to torture and death? What was it that came to them through the Cross of Christ, and possessed them with a spiritual passion to which all history provides no parallel? For at Pentecost not only was faith born in the hearts of doubters, and courage in the hearts of cowards, but the passion for preaching was born in them all. "They *all* spake with tongues, and prophesied." Every one had a vision to describe, an experience to relate, a secret to tell. "All the Lord's servants were prophets." Something had been kindled within them that the terrors of Jerusalem could not chill. What was the new consciousness, the new conviction, that exalted them and made men and women of crudest speech eloquent? What was it that woke the slumbering poet in these simple natures, and charged their homely utterance with a power that the rhetoricians might well have envied? No doubt it is

difficult, it may even seem presumptuous, to analyze their emotions. But we have the records to help us. We can trace the leading ideas that found expression in the first Christian sermons and the earliest Christian literature. We know what Peter taught, what Stephen testified, what Paul elaborated. We can read the challenge flung down to ancient creeds and civilizations. May I submit to you that the great new doctrines that received their inspiration and confirmation from Christ, and that became the very substance of the new Evangel, and the secret of its spiritual and social power, were two—*Immortality* and *Equality?* There, if you come to think of it, are the two supreme gifts of our religion—*Life* and *Love.*

(1) That Christ's gift of life was more than the assurance of immortality we are all agreed. To do the Christians of that first century justice it was Christ they valued; and they would rather have been mortal with Christ than immortal without Him. But the fact remains that the theme of the first Christian preachers was the Resurrection and all its

consequences. Life suddenly revealed itself to them in a glory that took their breath away and smote them to their knees in awe and rapture. For they knew themselves now as "immortals," and the splendour of the destiny humbled and exalted them. You remember the famous king who appointed a man to say ever to him, "Philip, thou art mortal" lest an unworthy pride should be his undoing. But henceforth the pilgrim church was to whisper in the ear of Humanity, "Man, thou art immortal; live as one of the immortals, and may a noble pride in thy origin and thy destiny save thee from baseness and dishonour."

It has become a favourite criticism of the Christian fathers that, overwhelmed by the vision of eternal life in Christ, they became other-worldly and counted life here of little moment if only they could make sure of bliss hereafter. For my part I could wish that every modern Christian had passed even an hour under the stress of the emotion which a realization of immortality ought to bring to each human soul. You have to conceive,

not a solitary prophet like Paul, but a very host of triumphant evangelists chanting the ecstatic challenge, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" What Egyptian and Jew had timidly and darkly received, and to which Greek Philosophy had occasionally uttered a pale and bloodless "perhaps," became to these witnesses the certainty of certainties, the truth of truths. History has to recognize that whatever did, or did not, happen on that first Easter morning, at that "lone Syrian grave," the effect was to shatter the incredulity and uncertainty of centuries, and out of dark abysses of speculation drag life and immortality to light, and set man henceforth to fulfill his earthly destiny conscious of an unconquerable and indestructible soul. Whether it is conceivable that that result was produced by an illusion, and was the fruit of falsehood, every one of us must judge for himself. When I see similar far-reaching effects of greatness spring from fallacy I shall myself believe the illusion theory, and not till then.

The picture that we owe to St. Luke of the

early Church is of men and women living in the rapture of a great beatitude. They are illuminated with "the glory of the lighted mind." If you come to think of it, the Resurrection of Christ meant everything to them. It was the vindication of that Fatherhood of God which must have suffered eclipse in the seeming tragedy of Calvary; it was equally the Divine vindication of Jesus, and the seal set upon His teaching and His life; it was moreover the vindication of the greatness of the human soul and its amazing destiny. When you add to these the conscious leadership of the living Christ, and the creative power of the sublime faith *Ubi Christus ibi Ecclesia*, you begin to understand the light that transfigured the Christian people of Jerusalem, and transformed one obscure upper room into the very Gate of Heaven. If we were not so slow and hard of heart to-day we should still feel the uplift of this magnificent revelation; we should still look upwards with the transports of the first Christians, and outwards with their reverence for humanity and faith in its future.

I confess to you I sometimes wonder whether our hearts are big enough and brave enough to attempt the Christian enterprise; whether something of the world's morbid and sceptic spirit has not darkened our sanctuary and paralyzed our very souls. Is it not true that our ark lies prostrate in the temple of Dagon instead of humbling to the dust the pagan and heathen conceptions against which we are professedly at war? We have the most exquisite instrument wherewith to discourse the most melting and ravishing of music; but we play our Stradivarius with a mute. We are afraid of its full tones. We fall back on the language of Tennyson and count it a great thing if we can say

> "We stretch *lame hands* of faith,"

or

> "We *faintly trust* the larger hope."

Lame hands and faint trust! With these we think to win the victories that are only possible to the heroes of religion. Little wonder that as the perplexed people listen on the one hand to the arrogant dogmatism of material-

istic science and on the other to the halting and hesitating and semi-apologetic discourse of the modern prophet of religion, we make but a poor appearance in the competition.

I do not want you to misunderstand me. It may be that the preacher of open and sincere mind has been wrestling by the ford Jabbok with the Angel of Truth and has halted on his thigh. He is conscious that somehow he walks lame in the paths his fathers trod with sure steps and upright carriage. It may be that if we knew all, we should take it for distinction; but the preacher himself is only conscious that the world has observed that he is lame, and is asking if not where is thy God, at least where is thy theology? And, believe me, we can do nothing without the sublime simplicities of Christianity. If a man does not know of a surety that personal God whom even the Prodigal at his husks can still speak of as "*My* Father," if he cannot kneel by the sin-stricken and announce to him with unclouded faith the certainty of forgiveness in Christ, if he cannot stand by the bedside of the dying

and encourage him in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, he may still do for the study, or the store, or the country house, but the Christian pulpit should know him no more.

I make even that last admission with some hesitation. For if we are in earnest in this matter we are bound to believe that this great creed is so determinative of character and life that no man—whatsoever his calling in life—can do his best work without it, and that apart from it every man's attitude to his fellows must be defective. Let me call to my aid a very brilliant leader of the medical profession in my own country. Addressing a meeting of medical students in the city of Sheffield, Sir James Crichton Browne advised them to beware of the materialistic school which regards a man's brain as no more than so much phosphorus and so much glue; and suggested that if a man is good and wise it is because his brain has a maximum of phosphorus and a minimum of glue, while if he is evil and foolish it is because his brain has a maximum of glue and a mini-

mum of phosphorus. Sir James went on to say that if the students adopted this materialistic conception of man's nature they would be disqualified from treating any one successfully as a patient even on the physical side. To be a true physician a doctor must understand the spiritual nature of his patients. The merely materialistic theory spells failure here and everywhere.

The best type of labour leader in my own land knows perfectly well how much is at stake in this great issue as to whether man is merely an animal of a higher order, and no more; or whether he is, as Christ taught, an immortal being. If our workmen listen to the materialism that is preached to them from a thousand platforms and in a thousand journals, they lose the most powerful of all motives for social betterment. If they think and talk of one another as no more than animals they only have themselves to thank if employers treat them as if they were no more than animals. We, on the other hand, who believe with Christ in the nobility and dignity of human nature, must press upon

the conscience of the community such questions as these. If the children of poverty and vice in the slums and alleys of our crowded cities, in cellars and garrets of tenement houses and elsewhere, are indeed immortal spirits destined to eternal existence, what is our duty to them? How can we sit with folded hands while men and women are wallowing in filth and slime who are sons and daughters of the Eternal? What new ideals of society are forced upon us when we dare to look at human life in the light of the Resurrection? In other words—what must our practice be, if we are still resolved to preach this magnificent Gospel?

(2) To the effect which the Evangelists of the Resurrection produced by their Gospel justice has been done by many historians. The violent antipathy of the Sadducaic school, which is always with us, manifested itself in an astonishing desire to exterminate all teachers who affirmed man's immortality. The heroic constancy of the Christian confessors in treating Death as no more than an

incident in Life, while it impressed the beholders, made the last dread weapon of the persecuter of none effect; and so paralyzed his arm. Of all this much has been written again and again. But I think less justice has been done to the effect of that new doctrine of Equality which found expression in the organized life of the first Christian communities, and was a definite challenge to every other social structure of the then world. The principle running through these primitive Christian societies was so simple that it is difficult to realize how profoundly revolutionary it was, and how subversive of the existing order of things. But any one can see that a church that offered equal privileges to, and conferred equal rights upon, the slave and the freeman; and acknowledged no authority of rank or station within its borders, but reverenced faith and character alone, threw down the gauntlet of defiance to the most deep-seated prejudices of our human nature.

Many a proud heart must have been the theatre of a life-and-death struggle between

hereditary scorn of the "canaille" and a consciousness of the truth of the new Religion—such a struggle as Bulwer Lytton portrayed in the patrician breast of Glaucus in "The Last Days of Pompeii." One realizes that it was far less a matter of embracing the Christian doctrine than of accepting the Christian society that antagonized the aristocrats of Greece and Rome. When the waves of an invading and resistless Christianity flowed inward to the Imperial Throne itself, the terror it inspired was due, not so much to any of its distinctive dogmas, as to this amazing fraternity, the unity of which no extremity of coercion could injure or destroy. You are to imagine men and women, with a new and evident inspiration upon them, preaching this uncompromising truth that God holds all human souls at equal value, and thinks no more of a Constantine than of the humblest day-labourer whom he has treated as dirt beneath his feet.

No doubt it was strong meat, difficult of digestion at any time and in any place, but most of all in a civilization founded upon

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slavery. But what are we to say when Paul gives this social teaching its widest application, and abolishes in one sublime phrase all the distinctions that lay behind the national antagonisms of that ancient world? "There is neither Jew nor Greek, . . . Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." What idols with feet of clay this new Hammer in the hands of this new Iconoclast was to shatter to pieces! What painstaking genius has been consecrated in subsequent centuries to the task of patching up these idols again! "Neither Jew nor Greek." Was all that cultivation of the spirit of exclusiveness, which is commonly called patriotism, to go for nothing? Was the Roman to have no pride of preëminence over the Barbarian? Was the fair child of classic Greece to be regarded as on an exact equality with the swarthy and uncivilized Scythian? Will these wild apostles of equality lay their disrespectful hands on the altars of hereditary aristocracy, social and racial, and suggest that the Roman is not to count for more than the "Angles" who are bought and sold in his slave-market? I am speak-

ing now of the great days when the faith was free and uncorrupt, the days before its unholy compromises with the world, the days before, in one splendid and fatal hour, it conquered the Roman Empire and was conquered by it. I am speaking of the time of its romance, when it surrendered nothing, and never dreamed of becoming safe and tame and respectable and even fashionable; the time when it feared no one and flattered no one; the time when its confessors were the men and women whom the world could not bully and could not buy. Then it was demonstrated that the Christian love, which is the creation of Christ, welded those who received it into a Brotherhood where external differences melted away and became non-existent, and the only realities in the world were the faith, the hope, and the love which were the enduring property of every believer.

If I seem to labour this point, it is because I touch here upon the real secret of the power which the first Christian preachers and confessors exercised, and which won their victory against such formidable odds. They were

sincerely indifferent to all that made up the ambitions of the world amid which they lived; and this indifference to the mere externals of life gave the powers and principalities no weapon with which to assail them. Nothing in all the marvellous records stands out clearer than the sense of hopelessness and failure that gradually overwhelmed their enemies. Nothing could be done against such men as these first Christian ancestors of ours which they either feared or felt. The dignities and emoluments on which princes and governments rely, not in vain, for dealing with awkward critics, or persons of inconvenient knowledge, had no attraction for these idealists. They were supremely disinterested. You and I are so accustomed to hearing the sneer of the cynics who assume that we are no more indifferent than the rest of mankind to the luxuries and resources of civilization that we have gradually consented to their theory; and in doing so have unintentionally impoverished our office of its kingliest power.

No cynic ever whispered such depreciation

of the men and women who held all their possessions cheap, and passed even from the mansion to the mine with serene tranquillity, turning every loss and deprivation into a sacrament. Open your Church History in its early chapters and read at random the thrilling letter of Cyprian to those ministers and members who had been condemned to labour in the mines. Some of them had been delicately nurtured. They had as much, one would suppose, to line their brows with care as the modern pastor who writes pathetically of the difficulty of "making good" in congested city or deserted village. But they certainly never pitied themselves, nor did their brethren offer them sympathy, but congratulation. Here is how Cyprian writes to them. "In the mines the body is refreshed, not by beds and pillows, but by the comforts and joys of Christ. Your limbs, wearied with labour, recline upon the earth, but it is no punishment to lie there with Christ. Your bread is scanty, but man lives not by bread alone but by the word of God. You are in want

of clothing to defend you from the cold, but he who has put on Christ has clothing and ornament enough. Even though, my dearest brethren, you cannot celebrate the communion of the Lord's Supper, your faith need feel no want. You do celebrate the most glorious communion; you do bring God the most costly oblation, since the Holy Scriptures declare that God will not despise a broken and a contrite spirit. Your example has been followed by a large portion of the Church who have confessed with you and been crowned. United to you by ties of the strongest love, they could not be separated from their pastors by dungeons and mines. Even young maidens and boys are with you. What power have you now in a victorious conscience—what triumph in your hearts, when you can walk through the mines with enslaved bodies but with souls conscious of mastery; when you know that Christ is with you, rejoicing in the patience of His servants, who in His footsteps and by His ways are entering into the Kingdom of eternity."

That is how Cyprian offers these disciples

and witnesses who had lost everything the world values, not his compassion but his congratulation. I am pressing upon you that the preachers of the first Christian centuries felt themselves the representatives of a new society, or as Dr. Harnack says, a new people, with unique standards. It is of immense importance that you should realize that Jews, Romans, Greeks, Barbarians, were offered citizenship in this new nation on equal terms; and that no differences of rank, education or wealth were allowed any consideration whatsoever. Not immediately perhaps, but gradually, they came to the consciousness that they were a new world-state, destined eventually to conquer and subdue all political nations, and supply the basis of a universal civilization. You will never understand the thoughts and passions that burned and blazed in these men's souls if you do not realize something of what this conception meant to them, and how attractive it was to those who listened. Dr. Hatch of Oxford in writing upon the early Christian centuries defined the eternal mission of

the Church as this—"to substitute for the socialism that is based upon the assumption of clashing interests, the socialism that is based on the sense of spiritual union."

The preachers of the apostolic age and the great centuries that followed were the heralds of that higher socialism. What their Gospel meant you can all estimate when you reflect that the members of the Roman nobility or the proudest family among the Jewish Pharisees had to confess the slave who had become a Christian as a social equal. But when you realize that, you will realize also why the ideals of the Christian society swept over the Roman Empire like a conflagration. For it is not the case in this much-maligned world, that a great human response awaits the carefully-calculated and shrewdly-balanced compromises, that aim at softening the susceptibilities of the rich without violently antagonizing the poor. The truths that conquer the world are not compromises at all, but certain splendid simplicities, not only courageously and unambiguously stated but, equally without qualification, accepted and

applied. Within the borders of this new people the social contrast was unchallenged ; and the preacher could without the shadow of hypocrisy or insincerity proclaim its reality to all the world. Do you ever wonder why it is that to-day, in our championship of our faith and order, our witness sometimes falters ; that we fall back upon apologies where we need to use unconditional affirmations? Can any preacher of to-day say from his pulpit, with the same fervour and sincerity as the first Christian preachers, that the Christian Church is a unique society of people where social distinctions do not exist, and where men and women of every race and condition may meet on the basis of absolute equality?

Yet for that we were created. Not to accept the old standards and have imposed upon us the old distinctions of an ancient pagan civilization, but to present a society which is a new creation in Christ Jesus, and which will kindle the enthusiasm and revive the hope of those who have found neither hope nor help in any other society in the world. Much of this that I am saying may apply

less to you than to my own land. These old caste feelings are only slowly dissolving before the nobler democratic influences that are now coming into play; and many generations, and even centuries will pass before the Christian ideal will be realized. Any preacher who talked of the Church as the home where social distinctions were unknown would not only be laughed to scorn, he would laugh his own statement to scorn. And the fact of the matter is we do not realize how large a section of Christian apologetic we have sacrificed; nor how invaluable and irreplaceable is the strategical position we have evacuated.

It is perhaps enough that I should say as I close that this that has been called Christian Socialism springs, as every worthy socialism does, out of a high individualism—a sense of the incalculable and imperishable worth of the human soul. This may seem to some of you the most old-fashioned truth to have thrust upon you in these modern days, but I am certain that no preacher is going to count for much who has not seen every

soul in the world in the light of the Christ who died for it. It seems sometimes as if modern civilization holds some souls very cheap. That may be. But it is the business of the Christian preacher to stand by his Gospel. What is that Gospel? It is contained in a verse of one of the greatest Christian hymns:

> "Were the whole realm of Nature mine,
> That were a present far too *small!*
> Love so amazing, so Divine,
> Demands *my Soul*——"

That is to say that my soul is a greater and bigger thing than "the whole realm of nature." Do you believe it? I agree it is the most romantic of all beliefs. It affirms that the soul of every forced labourer on the Amazon is of more value than all the mines of Johannesburg, all the diamonds of Kimberly, all the millions of all the magnates of America. It affirms that in God's sight all the suns and stars that people infinite space, are of inferior worth to one human spirit dwelling, it may be, in the degraded body of some victim of drink or lust, some member

of the gutter population of a great city who has descended to his doom by means of the multiplied temptations with which our so-called society environs him. It is a romantic creed. But if it is not true Christianity itself is false; and certain it is that there has never been any triumphant Christian movement in the history of the Church save as that high doctrine of the human soul has been preached. For Christianity lives by the majesty of its beliefs. It lives by its uncompromising truths. It lives by demanding of its disciples, not the minimum, but the maximum of faith and service.

To-day we are witnessing many audacious and inspiring endeavours to construct in this world new and more Christian civilizations. This principle that we hear so often on both sides of the Atlantic, that every man, woman and child shall have a fair chance—what does it mean? Who will be the prophets of that ideal if not ourselves? What argument can sustain so high and sacred a conception of duty except the argument as to the supreme worth of each individual soul?

It is from that that the real rights of man must spring. And for the overthrow of every system of government, or organization of society that is injurious to, or oppressive of, the individual life, this is the revolutionary doctrine that can be relied on. I charge you, as the inheritors of the peerless traditions and golden ideals of the primitive Christian society, as the modern prophets of the "new People," as the interpreters to this marvellous century of the eternal principles for which the Christian churches stand, that you steep yourselves in the thoughts and beliefs of the apostolic age, face bravely and unflinchingly their doctrines, and the social consequences of their doctrines, and that at all costs you hold back nothing of the truth for any fear or favour of man. For only thus shall we see in our time a growing reverence and enthusiasm for the Church of Christ, and the fulfillment of that hope which Dr. Hatch confessed in the most eloquent of his Bampton lectures, "a Church that shall outshine even the golden glory of its dawn by the splendour of its eternal noon."

LECTURE IV

THE ROYALTY OF THE PULPIT: ATHANASIUS AND CHRYSOSTOM

LECTURE IV

THE ROYALTY OF THE PULPIT: ATHANASIUS AND CHRYSOSTOM

THE Christian Church has been the nursing-home of great orators. This is not wonderful. For oratory to become great, it needs the inspiration of a great cause, of great ideals. This the Christian Church supplied, with its doctrines of the All-Father, of man triumphant by faith over sin and death, and of humanity destined to become one universal family in Christ. It made an overpowering appeal to the imagination in the mystery of the Word made flesh, in Paul's doctrine of solidarity, and in the revelation of eternal life. We know that as a matter of fact, so mighty was the new inspiration beneath which the souls of men were revived, that Art, Literature, Architecture, Music were born again. When we speak of Christian Art or Christian

Literature we do so because we are sensible of a new quality in them distinguishing them from art or literature under pagan forms.

The same is true of architecture and music. The Christian cathedral is different in kind from the noblest form of classical temple. We are conscious that the soul of the architect is seeking to express higher ideals of reverence and mystical experience. The student of poetry proposes to himself as a problem what it is in Dante that touches us so much more nearly and powerfully than Vergil, why all the poetry of the ancients is pale before the disciplined emotion and passion of Milton. Music can hardly be said to have found itself, and given permanent expression to human aspiration until it became the handmaid of Christianity, and gave utterance to the depths of human grief and heights of human rapture in the Oratorio and the Mass. To-day I ask you to believe, that this new inspiration of which Christ Jesus was the author, created also a new order of speakers, a new type of oratory. If I speak of Christian eloquence, it is be-

cause I believe that the highest type of eloquence the world has ever known is inseparable from the most exalted inspiration and can only flow from that source.

This is not said to depreciate the glorious philippics of Demosthenes, or the orations of Cicero, the two outstanding orators of the classic ages. But splendid as Cicero's speeches are, and worthy of your study as masterpieces of forensic eloquence with their invective, their argument, their satire, their wit, their occasional high ethical appeal, they do not stir the deepest emotions of our souls, or inspire in us the loftiest vision. The orations of Demosthenes are the utterances not only of a supreme rhetorician, but of a true prophet and a great patriot. In his passionate devotion to the liberties of his people he is one of the immortals. The glow of his heroic spirit is in his words still, and will keep them alive forever. But all local patriotism however deep and fervent must be inferior in real greatness to that patriotism to the kingdom of God which is the creation, I say it reverently, of the

genius of our Lord, and possessed by which men transcend their local racial distinctions, and realize their brotherhood with all humanity. When a soul speaks to us great enough to be illuminated by that ideal, and noble enough to be fired by that enthusiasm, he becomes the standing demonstration of the superiority of the power of Christianity, the universal religion, over every localized or nationalized form of religion whatsoever.

I ask your attention at this lecture to two great masters of rhetoric, admirable illustrations of the romance of preaching, whose astonishing careers provide innumerable lessons for the modern preacher. The two I refer to are Athanasius and Chrysostom. I associate them not so much because they were almost contemporaries in that critical fourth century, but because they were so dissimilar in the externals of their ministry while exemplifying so vividly the same supreme power of inspired personality. We shall see that so far as outward advantages

are concerned, Chrysostom had everything that Athanasius lacked. Nature had fashioned him to be an orator. He was tall and commanding in figure, handsome in features, with a magnificent organ-voice, and a flow of words which no other orator could rival. So far as education was concerned he had passed through the discipline of a legal training, and had won distinction at the bar before he was carried by irresistible sympathies into the service of the Church. We see the result of his legal practice in that lucid and cogent forensic style which made his expositions of Scripture so fascinating, and left the hearers without an answer.

But there is a vast difference between Chrysostom the legal pleader and Chrysostom the Christian pleader. Chrysostom's homilies are an exalted form of argumentative discourse; and it is the sacred passion that throbs through his periods that, even more than his rhetorical felicities, captures our interest still. Over against the royal figure of the golden-mouthed prince of preachers stands the one whose name and

fame overtopped that of emperors and military conquerors, but whose unparallelled ascendancy over his fellows was due wholly to spiritual, and in no degree to physical, properties. Ernest Renan described St. Paul, in one of those fierce phrases that live, as an "ugly little Jew." Athanasius was apparently a dwarf, shortening by a stoop even the squat figure. His nose was hooked, and he wore a stubby, bristling beard. His hair was apparently straw-coloured. It is surely not in such a guise that Mr. Bernard Shaw would have us recognize the super-man; and I suspect that many college committees might have hesitated long before accepting for the ministry one who would have required some mechanical means to add a cubit to his stature, before he could even have been seen over the side of any ordinary pulpit.

Yet super-man he was. I like to read how that strange countenance was illuminated to seraphic beauty by light of inward holiness and zeal for truth. Such was the mighty soul in the attenuated body of him who dared emperors and defied ecclesiastics, who was

exiled again and again and again and yet again, who was as much at home in the caves of the Egyptian deserts as in the council-chamber of Nicæa or the palace of Alexandria. No man was less depressed by defeat, or exalted by success. Yet the gorgeous annals of Constantine afford no parallel to the splendour of popular triumph, when Alexandria swept out beyond its walls to welcome back its banished preacher and bishop, the multitude of its people suggesting to an eye-witness the Nile overflowing its banks. Then came stepping along the sandy road out of the wilderness of his exile, the strange dwarf figure, with the beard whitened with toil and care, but the face still radiant, and the light in the eyes that told of the unconquerable soul. No modern preacher, with any pride in his sublime calling, can ever omit to do reverence at that niche in the great temple of prophets where the statue stands of

> "Royal-hearted Athanase
> By Paul's own mantle blest."

If only we could extract from the pages of history or extort by some scientific process

the secret of that magical fact we call *personality!* But in default of that, we may surely be pardoned for doubting whether any man is going to make more of the ministry than a very commonplace and even humdrum affair who has never been set on fire. It may be doubted whether all the modern athletic experts can add a cubit to our stature, and in any case, the conquest of the world does not depend upon it. Less and less will mere physical qualities, or mere brute force, stand for empire in the affairs of men; and this I venture to say who am nevertheless keenly alive to all the joys of bodily existence, and advantages of a trained physique. But *the one supreme qualification for the ministry is a soul of flame.* Helen Keller may be blind and deaf and dumb, but she has preached faith and courage and love all round the world; while millions of men and women of no physical defect whatsoever have never had any message to which it was worth while for any one to listen. The power to kindle the spirits of our fellows is the endowment for which we pray and plead. I am well

aware that no class-room can give it. Even amid the intellectual interests of university life, and the vivid enthusiasms of youth, it may be lost and not found. The minister who has it, carries with him everywhere the argument from which there is no appeal. The minister who has it not may labour pathetically with the tools of logic and rhetoric but at the end he will be desolate of spirit because of the little that his hands have built.

It is an old story this, yet we cannot get away from it, that the world bows before *soul.* What it wants to know about our religion is not so much that it is *reasonable* as that it is *real.* One of Athanasius' enemies wrote about him that he was "a dwarf and no man"; but once Athanasius rose to defend the faith that was dearer than his life and he was a man of giant stature and no dwarf. Vast audiences that were tempted to laugh at his puny figure and mean appearance, drew faith and hope and love and zeal from the Christ-illuminated soul of this apostolic preacher.

I would commend the study of Athanasius to any one who has not formed the true idea in his mind of the *royalty of the pulpit*, and that it is to be maintained in this world as the one place where the truth of God is to be proclaimed without fear or favour. Woe to that preacher who does not keep within his breast an incorruptible conscience, whose vision of God is clouded by unworthy fear of his audience, and whose self-respect is undermined by unmanly compromises and surrenders to placate wealthy or influential patrons! Everybody knows the temptation to substitute for the high and difficult vocation of a prophet of Truth, the amiable ambition to please a congregation. Many well-meaning ministers have spent weary years cajoling and flattering their people, softening down the rebukes of the Gospel, and lining Christ's hard sayings with velvet till the most touchy consciences in the pews of Christendom can come in contact with them without a shock. It might seem as if some preachers had laid down as a law for themselves to make nobody uncomfortable whose income

was more than £200 ($1000) a year. Quite recently I heard a sermon on luxury in a fashionable West-End church in London; and as the preacher took pains to explain that Christ's life was so different from ours that we could not imitate its externals, I was conscious of that pleasant rustle of silk and satin which gently indicated the relief of the hearers. I doubt whether anything has done so much harm to the pulpit as the impression which has gone abroad, that we preachers do not face the tremendous sayings of Christ with real faith and courage, but rather that we fall back on critical theories, and explain to our amenable congregations that the more difficult commands of Christ are probably textual corruptions due to a later and ascetic age, and in any case need not vex the peace or alter the conduct of the twentieth century. Yet these sayings of Jesus blaze and burn. What use is our New Testament if it is not a very furnace of Truth into which men's souls are plunged and purified, and saved so as by fire?

I have no belief whatever in ascetic and

monastic systems, which seem to me to require an unchristian, and even anti-Christian theory of life. But I confess to you I am impressed by the fact that both Athanasius and Chrysostom had a monastic preparation for their public ministry. Youth needs to be austere with itself. Self-discipline can be learned in better places than the cell of the anchorite, but it must be learned if the ministry is not to make shipwreck. These men learned how to do without things; they learned to be content with simplicity; they learned that life "consisteth not in the abundance of the things a man possesseth." They definitely crucified some of the subordinate ambitions. They got fairly through the crust of civilization and made contact with the realities that lie at its heart. Such men when they come to deal with shams and illusions are apt to be severe iconoclasts, like Elijah and John the Baptist, but they know how to sear men's souls and shake their consciences.

Sometimes I am tempted to think that the defect of our modern ministerial preparation

for the ministry is that we have too much to enjoy and too little to endure. When we go out into the arena our thews and sinews are too soft; and in the first shock we go down in the dust, and sometimes it takes bitter years to find our feet. When we are dependent on the superfluities of life we are not so likely to be able to speak out our truth, if by so doing we may be in danger of losing them.

Do not let me be misunderstood. I am the last man to underrate to you the virtues of tact and discretion. It was Athanasius' distinction that his own people loved him and trusted him without reserve. He had the two endowments with which any minister can go far—common sense and the gift of humour. Besides, I think too highly of mankind to believe that as a rule they resent the ministry that deals faithfully and affectionately with them. Dr. Dale used to say that people talked of saying *faithful* things when they meant saying *disagreeable* things; and the communicated love of Christ to our hearts ought ever to forbid us to be censorious, offensive and truculent where our duty is to

speak the truth with love. I have not intended to leave that side of things out of sight. But if Athanasius and his heroic ministry has one message more than another for us, it is as to the sovereignty of the Truth we hold over all human souls, and the royalty of the preacher's office when he knows that God has given to him a message which all without distinction must hear and heed.

The second aspect of Athanasius' ministry which I would ask you to consider is *the preacher as controversialist.* When we take down our histories and read the extraordinary story of how an abstract theological proposition, framed in the curiously flabby mind of Arius, set the world on fire, we are oppressed by a sense of despair of ever being able to understand an age in which such things could be. Neither do the facts become more intelligible as we see how secular policies were affected by it, and the fortunes of an empire fluctuated as the Arian tide flowed or ebbed. But after all, human destinies are settled in the world of thought and ideas. The doctrine of Homoousianism in the mouth of Athanasius

meant the unity of empire even as the word Justification on the lips of Luther meant the Reformation of Europe and a free Western civilization. Faber threw into the verse of a hymn a great truth when he wrote :

> " Workman of God ! oh lose not heart,
> *But learn what God is like ;*
> And in the darkest battle-field
> Thou shalt know where to strike."

That is why I take it the first content of the Church's consciousness must be to know " what God is like " ; otherwise its very fighting power is paralyzed, and its blows are aimed uncertainly. It does not surprise me, therefore, that the first great controversy in the Christian Church should be in regard to the nature of God ; and we shall generally be agreed that as against the crude and fatuous theory of Arius, Athanasius' protest for the unity of the Godhead was infinitely more noble and dignified ; even as the orations of Athanasius are a monument of massive thought and argument in comparison with the dervish-like jingles in which Arius endeavoured to popularize his pet heresy. But

it is quite true that from the far shore on which we stand we look across "the dark backward and abysm of time," and see those ages of theological cyclone and volcanic action with wondering gaze. That is very largely because we have ourselves fallen upon the inglorious days of Quietism. It is a strange irony if you come to think of it that sluggishness and apathy mark our religious life to-day in what we speak of as the strenuous West, and that this great Arian controversy was fought out with frenzied fervour in what we speak of as the still and tranquil Orient. Certainly the Orient was not sluggish and stagnant when Athanasius was fighting the world for his faith.

You remember the cynic historian's description of how the great problems laid their grip of every huckster in the market-place, who, before he served you with merchandise, or counted out your small change, would demand your opinion as to the relations of the Persons of the Godhead. Very likely, I grant, to produce a plague of theological prigs! But would it do us any harm

to-day, in your land or in mine, if some great question of eternal things were once again to be supreme, and to awaken in the chattering chaffering crowds of the market-places a higher curiosity? Is it after all so noble and superior an attitude of mind, this modern one of ours, that nothing matters; that high thoughts about Deity are wasted time; that sublime speculations and doctrinal controversies are the signs of an inferior and degenerate age? I am not here to apologize for the controversial language of Athanasius. Dean Stanley made a careful but not exhaustive collection of his favourite epithets for his theological opponents—"devils, antichrists, maniacs, Jews, polytheists, atheists, dogs, wolves, lions, hares, chameleons, hydras, eels, cuttlefish, gnats, beetles, leeches." His vocabulary, it is plain, might have won for him distinction in a political career.

But in theology to-day we have reached serene heights of unruffled calm. The chaste soul of the most definite of our modern dogmatists would never be conscious of sufficient provocation to depart from the language of

self-possession and politeness even if he indubitably believed that the errors of some other teacher were poisoning men's souls. But do we not suggest a contrast? Theology to-day is for the most part a product of the academic life. In the days of Athanasius it was hammered out in the wilderness and the cell. Men forged their beliefs, like thunderbolts, at the centre of the storm. The faiths that clothed their souls were tested in the furnace heated sevenfold. You can still tell the difference between the article of a creed cunningly worded to evade a difficulty, conciliate a doubter or confound an enemy, and an affirmation which is the cry of a great soul for some truth which is a fixed star in its firmament and without which it will blunder along its way. It is this passionate sincerity that lends dignity to controversy. As we read the story, all Athanasius' extravagances and personalities drop away from him, and we only see the prophet who cared so supremely for the glory of his God and the honour of his Saviour, that he was prepared to stand alone against the

world, until the truth he saw was recognized and acknowledged by all.

My brethren, it is an open question with me whether either the evils of controversy or the gains of compromise are as great as we often think them. Controversy is noble or ignoble according to the spirit in which it is conducted. What is referred to, *ad nauseam*, as the virtue of compromise and accommodation usually means the painful discovery of some colourless and almost meaningless formula in which two antagonistic ideas, whittled down to their minimum, are supposed to be peaceably interred. I am always comforted to know that you cannot really bury any belief *alive*. You cannot bury it until you can truly say, "peace to *its ashes*." It belongs to the glory of Athanasius that, even living when he did, he had no belief in the coercion of conscience by force. He was, rather, like the dear old priest in Praed's poem, who

> "Held, in spite of all his learning,
> That if a man's belief is bad
> It will not be improved by burning."

This zealot for truth, and even for dogma, believed in fighting his battle out with the weapon of argument, reason and persuasion, and winning the only victory that is honourable to a Christian combatant. Nobody expects that our battles of to-day or to-morrow will prove a reproduction of the old Arian strife; though there are more unlikely things than a keen revival one of these days of a controversy as to the being of God and the nature of the relations between the Father and the Son. But if it should not be your lot to live through an age of theological dispute, there are other controversies upon us in which the knights of the Church of Jesus may not refuse to quit them like men. There has never been a generation yet in which the Lord has not had a controversy with His people; and it is a test of our right to be where we are, whether we hear the Lord's controversy or not. We cannot rank ourselves under the Christian flag without conceding certain human rights, which no existing social system that I know of, adequately and practically interprets.

The contrast between the Sermon on the Mount and a civilization like that of Europe, based on force and fear, does not grow less violent as our people become more intelligent. Nor can a civilization that includes the extremes of pampered luxury and grinding poverty live in the light of a renascent Christian ethics. Controversy there must be on behalf of the unity of humanity as strong and uncompromising as Athanasius ever waged for the unity of Deity. When many of you go forth to the field where in Milton's words "immortal garlands are to be won *not without dust and heat*"; when in the war for Christian Righteousness as well as for the Christian Faith you flash your maiden swords, I can only beseech you that the spirit of your warfare may be the spirit which our Captain made unique—a love that no bitterness can alienate, a peace that no strife can disturb, and a gaiety of soul which can take the rubs and knocks without melancholy, acrimony, or self-pity.

I turn now to a brief consideration of the life and work of Chrysostom, who has al-

ways enjoyed a place of preëminence among Christian preachers and the world's famous orators, and who may suggest many lessons to the more ambitious among us who are resolved to achieve and to practice the craft of a master of assemblies. So far as I know, Chrysostom was the first preacher to bring to the service of the Gospel all the arts of oratory which are relied upon in the law-courts and the forum. Nobody knew better than he how to take captive the intellects of his hearers in the toils of a closely-knit argument; and, indeed, it would be true to say that he observed the golden rule that rhetoric should always be the servant of logic, even as in a great picture the absence of accuracy of drawing and perspective can never be wholly atoned for by the most resplendent colouring. First of all, he knew clearly where he was going, and saw to it that his hearers could not fail to know. Afterwards he devoted all the resources of his knowledge and imagination to add to the interest and profit of the journey. He must indeed have been a formidable critic and antagonist,

for his powers of irony and satire were unrivalled, and no person in high place who came under his scathing censures was ever likely to forget it. Satire is a dangerous weapon to handle; and only a kindly and genial form of it is ever likely to produce a Christian end in repentance or conversion; and perhaps in his last years of exile and persecution, Chrysostom himself may have wondered whether other weapons than the lash of fiery and sarcastic speech might not have profited the kingdom of God more. Moreover, if satire is always a questionable instrument for achieving the real ends of preaching, rhetoric is equally an indulgence that needs to be carefully guarded. Chrysostom's courage in rebuking the Empress Eudocia was admirable, but his task would have been many times easier if he had not allowed himself to be carried away at first on the tide of rhetoric, to inflated and fulsome panegyric and adulation.

Having uttered those two warnings, I go on to say that Chrysostom's style is a model of what Christian eloquence at its highest

can be. You and I live in a time when, as I shall often have occasion to insist, the preacher has lost the sense of the splendour and romance of his calling. This loss has affected us in many ways. The colours have faded out of our sky. The universe has turned gray around us. The glory and radiance of the dawn have suffered some eclipse. Our range of vision, and our confidence of victory are alike attenuated. In consequence, that highest form of rhetoric which is the glow and poetry of faith and enthusiasm becomes almost impossible to us. For rhetoric is the natural language of emotion and imagination. Where there is no real depth of feeling it is artificial and stilted and tiresome. But when the passion of the heart is strong and deep it will express itself with some splendour of Pre-Raphaelite colouring. The preacher has never really been thrilled by the ideal of his vocation who has not wanted to set it to music, as Robert Burns set Nature to song, or as Turner transferred her glories to canvas.

It is hardly necessary to say that the rhetoric of Chrysostom has little or nothing in

common with that disease of the pulpit egoist which manifests itself in pretentiousness and polysyllables. If you want the model of peerless eloquence it is to be found in the most familiar passage of the New Testament, and it may interest you to count the words which are of more than one syllable, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." There are great passages in Lincoln and in Bright—our two supreme modern masters of Saxon speech—which are as simple as this, and yet similarly charged with emotion that leaves none of us unaffected. No, rhetoric is a nobler thing than the turgid recital of redundant epithets and high-sounding substantives. To how small a modicum of thought can some rhetorical efforts be reduced when you have shaken the sawdust out! But as against the modern taste for Christianity in capsules, and for the tersest, most prosaic and least emo-

tional statement of fact and argument, I do venture to break a lance for Chrysostom.

The supreme merit of Chrysostom is that he never for one moment forgets that he is dealing with human beings and human life. He is not solely concerned with making good certain logical or theological propositions. While his legal training is invaluable to him, his is no narrow canonistical intellect, nor is his outlook upon mankind less human because of the careful development of his reasoning powers. Before his eyes the great pageantry of the people's life always moves; and in his sermons you will find a vivid picture of his times. On his canvas are brilliant splashes of colour; for it was his object to hold up the mirror to the multitude and compel them to see what their existence was like. It has been truly said that the pages of Chrysostom present us with a "cosmical panorama." The pomp and pride of the Imperial court, and the luxurious mode of life of an Oriental aristocracy are so powerfully portrayed, that after fifteen hundred years you

can almost hear the strains of music at some princely banquet or be conscious of the perfumes that scented the raiment of the feasters. Equally lifelike are his descriptions of the hippodrome, with its wild scenes of racing and gaming; while, if I may quote again, "Even the rope-dancers, jugglers, conjurers, fortune-tellers, buffoons, mountebanks mingled with grave philosophers with long beards, staff and cloak, were grouped together in his homiletical sketches."

Here lies his charm and his power. This man of giant brain, and legal and monastic training, is nevertheless himself a human being, with a warm heart and wide knowledge of his brothers and sisters in the life of his city. He has mingled with them in their pleasures, has pitied their follies, sympathized with their temptations, trembled for their sins, wept with them for their griefs, and laughed with them in their frolics and diversions. The people flocked to him and hung upon his lips, not only because of his oratory, but because he knew them so well, loved them so much, and talked to them about those actual

homely facts of daily life which make up the greater part of every one's existence.

Here then we have two qualities in Chrysostom which in their combination make him unique—he is a *Man of the Word and a Man of the World.* The Homilies of Chrysostom are to me a phenomenal production. In their close and minute analysis of Scripture, and courage of exposition they are an anticipation of the best modern criticism. Chrysostom himself is saturated with the Scripture, and is determined that his audiences shall be taught to base their lives upon the principle of Holy Writ. In those days when the writings of the New Testament were comparatively so recent, and were so little known to the masses, this great preacher felt that their best hope of progress lay in their systematic education in the letter and spirit of the Scriptures of our faith. He thus made himself the popular interpreter of the Christian documents, always endeavouring to get at the exact sense, and to preach the truth honestly and fearlessly. At the same time by virtue of his catholic experience he

is, in the best sense of a much-abused term, a man of the world; and he is resolute to apply the Gospel ethics over the whole wide area of human life and affairs. That is why he must know at first hand, life at the court, life in the bazaars, life at the games, and life in the streets, the school, the homes of the people. Again and again we find him, with all his admiration for the devout monk, protesting that Christ's laws and privileges are for all men and women without exception and "not for solitaries only." If it be not possible, he argues, in the secular life, and in wedded life, to attain the Beatitudes, then Christ has destroyed, and not saved, all men. No preacher in all the Christian ages had a clearer conception of the great truth that the Evangel of Life in Christ is for all people, at all times and in all places, and that no exigencies of business, politics or pleasure can relieve any of us of the duty of obedience to the laws of the kingdom of God.

I notice further for our own instruction that the Homilies of Chrysostom are not the expositions of a *lecturer*, but, what is very differ-

ent, the expositions of a *preacher*. There is a very wide contrast between one who is only a teacher, an expositor, a lecturer, an essayist, and one who is a preacher and a prophet. It has always seemed to me that there is much force in the modern appeal for more expository preaching. I only submit that it must be *preaching*. The class-room is one place, the pulpit is another. The closest possible application is needful in the study if we are to be sound interpreters of the Gospel; and the new Renaissance which some of us will live to see, when the interest of the people will be rekindled in the best and greatest of all books, may very likely come along the line of systematic and scientific exposition. But we have got to *preach* our exposition. I mean, that the same passion for souls, the same constraining love of humanity, must burn and glow in our expository discourses that make it possible to warm our hearts at Chrysostom's Homilies to the present day. Men must be brought to see that in the Bible one end is sought by divers means and in divers portions, and that

end is the salvation and happiness of all mankind. In other words if the world is to be interested in the Bible, it must be convinced that the Bible is interested in the world; and that the modern world is made up of just the same great root problems of life and death, joy and sorrow, vice and virtue that Isaiah wrestled with, and on which the Lord Christ shed His ineffable and unfading light.

The advent of Chrysostom is, I think, the dawn of a new epoch in preaching. True, there is nothing new in the authority which he asserted for his message. In his courage and freedom in dealing with the wealthy and highly-placed he was the worthy contemporary of Athanasius. There was nothing new in the risks he ran, or the afflictions he suffered. He was one of those who well knew that the preacher's lot is a desperate war with organized evil and throned iniquity. The length of his public ministry is a tribute to his moral ascendancy. But we are not astonished, though we may stand aghast, when at last the forces of hell are let loose upon

him, and once more in history Jezebel drives Elijah to exile and the desert, though in this case the prophet was to return no more. The long-drawn-out agony of his last exile it is not for me to describe. He died in that same far lone spot among the mountains of Asia Minor, where many centuries afterwards another martyr-evangelist, Henry Martyn, burned out for God. His dust rested there until the day when with pontifical splendour amid the tears and reverence of a subsequent generation and solemn prayers and penances of princes and people, it was translated to the City of Constantine where the better part of his life-work had been done.

It has been my aim that the significant facts about these two great pulpit orators should emphasize themselves for us without my italicizing them. But perhaps by way of summary I may gather together two or three suggestions that are well worth your consideration. I think we want a new pulpit oratory that will be free from the vice of turgid rhetoric, but that will be the rich fruit of a new

vision of our world-conquering Faith. Something has got to happen to us; some magic change must pass over our spirits; and beneath the inspiration of the new revelation of Deity and Humanity our speech will clothe itself with colour and beauty as naturally and inevitably as the spring adorns and decorates the earth. I am one of those who believe that the churches have never been so rich in scholarship, and so competent in criticism. But I am not sure that any human being has been inspired to attempt the heights of love and life because he has been thrilled with the realization of the composite character of the Book of Genesis. Science is the one authority left, I know, to which we all do obeisance, and in the presence of which we take off our shoes from our feet. But I sometimes imagine the mere scientist standing in the presence of the wonder and glory of Niagara, with its flashing, flying waters, and iridescent waves, and summing it all up in the terse and eloquent formula H_2O. I am all for scientific accuracy and precision; but I confess that the Bible is more to me than is summed

up in the formulas of critical analysis. Its magic, its mystery, its poetry, its glory escape the skill of those patient investigators who track its secret in the dissecting room. Athanasius' theology may have been wrong; but nothing can destroy the fact that he trod the desert as he trod the marble halls of princes bathed in the light that never was on sea or land. Let us be quite certain that in our honest ambition to understand all mysteries and all knowledge we are not strangers to that experience of the Love Divine of which there is no scientific explanation possible except that it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is given unto us.

Once more, let us think of these two great apostles together. If I may make the rough distinction, Athanasius preached more about Deity and Chrysostom more about humanity. Chrysostom I think knew men better, and Athanasius I think knew God better. I have spoken to little purpose if I have failed to bring home to my hearers, that I believe we need men in the ministry who know and

sympathize with human life in all its phases. But to-day I close upon the other note. It is much easier to talk about men than to talk about God. It is a rarer thing to find in the pulpit a man whose mind moves naturally and easily in the sublimest of all themes and experiences, than to find a man in the pulpit who can talk wisely and helpfully about human life. But it is the condemnation of the Christian preacher when his audience comes to feel that though he knows them very well, he cannot teach them to know God, whom to know is life eternal. Wordsworth's lark, as you remember, with nest upon the earth, was nevertheless born to the freedom of the upper air, and knew the secret of the infinite blue, and the Christian prophet and orator of to-morrow, I doubt not, must equally be master of the two worlds

"True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home."

LECTURE V

THE RULERS OF PEOPLES: SAVONAROLA, CALVIN AND JOHN KNOX

LECTURE V

THE RULERS OF PEOPLES: SAVONAROLA, CALVIN AND JOHN KNOX

IT should never be forgotten that the preacher's message has a *timeless* and a *timely* element in it. Clearly, the historical facts on which our faith is built cannot be one thing in one generation and another in another; though our interpretations of the facts may and will change, and our applications of the teachings they convey will change also. It is written in the book of Psalms, in what I have often felt was an inspired mistranslation, "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." The meaning of that seemingly cryptic saying would appear to be that we cannot really be reverent of God's law of life and progress, the law of growth, unless we are prepared for new formulas and new forms under which the Truth may find expression. Whenever a Christian preacher and the church to which

he ministers are unprogressive, the interest taken by the outside public in their existence becomes mainly an antiquarian one. They are no longer reckoned among those living forces that mould our thought, shape our institutions, and inspire our ideals. We hear a great deal about our historic faith, and much stress is laid upon the fact that we have nearly two thousand years of eventful history behind us.

But that is an argument that clearly has no weight against the devotees of religions which are indefinitely more ancient. I hope it is not straining a point to say, that the charm of Christianity is not in its antiquity but in its novelty; not in the fact that it is aged and reverend, but in the fact that it is eternally young. I say nothing of those strange souls, who are so profoundly uneasy in the life of to-day, and who ever turn their wistful eyes backwards to the paradise of the Middle Ages. They are not of their century, and the century does not belong to them. But the real Church of God ever walks the world with the tireless step, the eyes for-

ward—gazing eyes, and the mobile receptive spirit of youth. If ever the disciples of Christ were to become a society in which the ennuis and dubieties of the world were to eat like acid into its enthusiasms and its faiths, it is quite clear that Christianity would be at the end of its conquests. What all other religions, societies and institutions envy us, is the magic of rejuvenation. So far from transformations and renaissances having any terror for us we know that with us they belong to the nature of things. History has in this respect a heartening tale to tell. Christendom has again and again, if I may use the apostolic language, been "transformed by the renewal of the mind."

Great and beneficent changes of doctrine have swept over Europe. New truths have arisen whose evangelists have forsaken everything, yea life itself, to make them the permanent heritage of Christ's people. And with these renewals of the faith and thought of Christendom there has gone equally radical reconstruction of her institutions. All this means that Christianity has possessed to

a supreme degree that power of adaptation to changing needs and conditions which is the accepted scientific law of life and growth. When the great apostle declared, "I am become all things to all men if by any means I may save some," he laid down the principle of Christian opportunism. He was not leaving out of account the unchangeable and timeless element in his ministry, but he was taking count of the timely element. He boasted, as you remember, of his own versatility. He could become as a Greek to the Greek, as a Roman to the Roman, as a Jew to the Jew. He made it his business to understand his audiences, to meet them on their own ground, and to appreciate different points of view. Especially in dealing with his avowed antagonists, he was resolved to know their beliefs, their prejudices, their passions, so that in the science of "parry and thrust" he should not find himself "beating the air." That was why Paul did not hesitate to withstand Peter to his face, in defense of freedom, and over against the theory that it is the business of Chris-

tianity to impose uniformity of custom and ceremony upon men and women of diverse races and manners of life. It was the common sense of the apostle Paul, and the tenacity with which he clung to the principle of opportunism that saved Christendom, and made a world-wide evangelism possible. Again and again, the largest interests of the kingdom have been safeguarded by those heroic preachers who had the soul of romance in them, and who would not be bound hand and foot by ecclesiastical red-tape.

The great merit of Paul's audacious policy was, that he was a strategist who thought out his strategy on the actual field of war, and not in some remote Jerusalem war-office where parchment and sealing-wax were more plentiful than experience and foresight. The most fatal of all the Church's dreams has been the dream of uniformity. Even Paul's splendid courage and example were not equal to ridding the Church of this dangerous delusion. But this we can say: all those spiritual leaders, in whom the fires of the Gospel have manifestly burned, even when they have been

most reverent of authority, have found some way out of the fetters and manacles that chafed their limbs and limited their activity. Thus Xavier and St. Francis could not be restrained from transgressing the strict order of the Church of Rome; nor Wesley and Whitefield abandon their inspired errand because its fulfillment meant the violation of those supposed decencies and proprieties which had made the Anglicanism of their day so prim and safe, so dull and dead. To the apostles of uniformity everything is regulated by unchangeable routine. There is no room for surprises. All departures from precedent are extravagances. The spirit of God is carefully restricted to well-defined functions, and within a limited area. Hence the spiritual life of the people of God must not overflow the appointed channels.

Such is the theory of ecclesiasticism. But the prophet is the one man who upsets the calculations of the prelate. He is the man of soul with a genius for the unexpected and the unprecedented. He is a spiritual Samson who is never happier in mind than when he

is bound with the futile withes of the Philistines. And I make bold to say that the greatest fact in Christian history is not the authority of the priest but the authority of the prophet. I do not underrate the prodigious power of ecclesiasticism. It has often been cruelly and mercilessly exercised, and the measure of external conformity that it has enforced has been very great. But the prophet has wielded a mightier power; for he has swayed the inner world of men's consciences, intellects and souls. He has governed and guided motives. He has inspired ideals of life and service. And in that way, without the mailed arm of material force, he has set in motion beneficent reformations and even revolutions, and has more profoundly influenced and affected the world-movements which make human history what it is, than all the power of the ecclesiastical machine.

It is my intention in this lecture, to invite your consideration to three outstanding examples of Christian preachers who veritably became the conscience of the communities where they laboured, and the

people for whose souls they watched as those that must give account. Each of these preachers dominated the life of a commonwealth. Each of them in his day of power reduced all other figures in the land to insignificance, and ruled the life of the people from the pulpit as from a throne. The three of whom I propose to speak are Savonarola of Florence, John Calvin of Geneva, and John Knox of Scotland.

And first, of the martyr of Florence. I have little to do with Savonarola's wonderful life-story save as it concerns the man as preacher. But it may be said that three great facts determined the form of his ministry—the shameless corruption in the Church, the open profligacy and sinful luxury of the ruling classes, and the renaissance of art and learning. Savonarola's sensitive temperament was profoundly affected by all these signs of the times. It was his cross to live and bear witness in days when the princes of the Church outvied, in greed and lust and passion, the princes of the State. He was one of many

who fled to the cloister as to a sanctuary to escape the contagion of the plague of immorality. He was driven across the Apennines to Florence by the scourge of war wielded by the merciless hand of an arrogant and ambitious "Vicar of Christ," who actually died of grief and rage because of the conclusion of peace.

From Sixtus IV to the dissolute Innocent VIII and the infamous Alexander VI, it was Savonarola's melancholy fate to live through the period when the apostle's lurid description of the adversaries of the true faith was most perfectly fulfilled—"world-rulers of this darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places." Little wonder that the monasteries were filled by those who were driven there by despair, or that Savonarola was one of them. Neither did the new culture at first affect the pulpit for good. It bred affectation of learning. It had its fruit in the scholastic temper and speech. It enriched the artificial orations of windy rhetoricians with obscure and sometimes even obscene illustrations from the

classics. The pulpiteer with a thin veneer of scholarship became the plague of the Church; and when you have a whole generation of preachers who care more for prettinesses of composition than for the cure of souls, religion ceases to be a spiritual force, and is regarded only with pity and contempt. Students of the dark age through which Savonarola prophesied, are moved to wonder that seemingly there were no real tears in the soul of any priest in the land, save in Savonarola's alone.

The realization of the sin and shame of Church and State alike affected him with horror and anguish. But it is worth our while to remember, that the one man who really cared for the well-being of Florence and of Italy, was the man there was least eagerness to hear. Savonarola had the bitter and humiliating experience of seeing his congregation diminish almost to vanishing point, and to hear the complaint under which many a thoughtful earnest preacher has suffered, that he did not cultivate the necessary arts and graces that can alone

commend him to a congregation. He saw the masters of a histrionic style who tickled the ears of their hearers with their shallow artifices, addressing crowds of hearers who were well pleased with an entertainment that made no demand upon intellect or conscience. But he who sought to bring the light of Holy Writ to bear on the burdens and miseries of humanity, to plead for purity and freedom, and to reason of judgment to come was advised to practice more graces of speech. To Savonarola it was as if a land was being devastated by man-devouring dragons, while the anointed St. Georges rained polished epigrams, and clever jests at the monsters, instead of girding on a sword of stout steel, and making at them in the name of God. Not that Savonarola was unaffected by the new learning. It helped him to see to the heart of the Scriptures. It loosened his obstinate attachment to the traditions of the Church. It compelled him to face many problems of thought which he would otherwise have evaded. If he never reached a very consistent position as a theologian, it was be-

cause his powers were mortgaged to other purposes; and in his desperate fight for moral and social righteousness he had little leisure to examine whither his intellectual independence was leading him.

But one thing is certain. Savonarola's ultimate triumph as a preacher is *the triumph of naturalism in the pulpit.* He scorned the tricks and sophisms of those who won a cheap and fleeting popularity, but who exercised no lasting influence. He set himself to reach and stimulate the withered, wizened conscience of the multitude; and to do it he relied on the instrument of plain, searching, passionate speech. To quote his own words which are worthy of your attention, "These verbal elegancies and ornaments will have to give way to sound doctrine simply preached." Do not misunderstand him. The idolatry of simplicity may be carried too far. The great moving discourses which swept all Florence subsequently into the cathedral to sit at Savonarola's feet, were surprisingly simple and direct and scriptural, but the passion of the

preacher expressed itself in the irresistible rush of his flaming sentences which no soul could face and remain unscathed.

Savonarola is an easily vulnerable person to the armchair critic. His philosophy is unconvincing, his visions often took the place of argument, his ecclesiastical position was to the end ambiguous. The censor of the pulpit finds many of his most powerful and famous sermons turgid, and complains that there is too little light and shade. I am not attempting an apology for Savonarola; but I may be allowed to point out that the test of a good sermon is not that it satisfies certain canons of style, but that it achieves certain moral and spiritual ends; and I may also be allowed to doubt whether his latter-day critics would have done better than he in rousing Florence from her turpitude and stagnancy, and recreating the ancient civic spirit. His power lay in the realization of the magnitude of the struggle, and that only by the uttermost devotion could Christ's victory be won. He urged every believer to seek "that Christ's doctrine might be a living

thing in him," and that he might "desire to suffer His martyrdom, and mystically hang with Him on the same cross." If ever any man knew the meaning of "resisting unto blood, striving against sin," it was Savonarola.

Judged by the test that a great sermon is to make its hearers ready to fight and die for the faith, Savonarola was a supreme preacher. Moreover he is an illustration of my opening remarks in that he was a "timely" preacher, "a Christian opportunist" in the Pauline sense. His was an *adaptable* message, in the sense that he was not so inflexible in his views as not to modify his position under the stress of a consciousness of Divine coercion. This is, of course, most strikingly exemplified in his reluctant descent into the arena of politics; and his gradual perception, against all his prejudices, that a free Florence could only be won, and a Christian Florence could only be created, as the authority of the Word was acknowledged in the government of the city as well as in the administration of the Church. It is worth

your while to notice for how long a time Savonarola's one ideal for the Church was that she should excel in charity. It was reluctantly forced upon him, as it were, that she must show herself the appointed guardian of freedom and justice; and that to quote his words, "It is the Lord's will that ye should renew all things, that ye should wipe away the past; so that nought may be left of the old evil customs, evil laws, evil government." It was then that he cried out in St. Mark's that he would not enter on affairs of state "did I not deem it necessary for the salvation of souls." "That *by all means* I may save some," as Paul had expressed it. He had come to see that any mundane reformation needs a higher inspiration than motives of expediency. He challenged the contemptuous dictum "that states cannot be governed by Paternosters"; for the Lord's Prayer is a fountain of all wisdom, social and spiritual, and the men who have that prayer in their hearts, are most likely to reform the commonwealth to good purpose.

With his spirit newly-enkindled for the

great task, and his horizon of service widened, he laid down, and enforced it out of the Christian documents, that all power is derivative from the people; to use his own words, "that no man may receive any benefit save by the will of the whole people, who must have the sole right of creating magistrates and enacting laws." It was the new conviction in his soul that Divine sanction can be claimed for this political proposition, and that here lay the final safeguard against arbitrary power, and the ultimate guarantee of good citizenship, that changed the course of Savonarola's ministry, and clothed him for a while with the authority of social as well as moral leadership in Florence. I cannot take you through the details of what is, in the main, a glorious record of constitution-building, the abolition of unjust and arbitrary taxation, the levying of taxes only on real property, the establishment of courts of appeal, and above all the creation through the new order of government of a citizen unity, which, but for the revival of the base spirit of faction, would have saved Florence, and

might have saved Italy, from many a disastrous chapter of history. Let any one whose artistic soul is wounded by the puritanical fanaticism that had vent in "the burning of the vanities," or any one whose calm modern mind shrinks from the recognition of weird visions as inspired leadership, or any one who reads something of cowardice into the awful decisions of the last fateful months, recognize if they can the astonishing practical sagacity of Savonarola's statesmanship, and his ultimate devotion to his ideals even through the bitterness of the stake and the cord, and the unspeakable moral anguish of being betrayed by the people of his love.

Let them remember, as I prefer to do, for final memory, the triumphant day when first the children of Florence were led from the folly and indecency of the Carnival into the great Church that they too might acknowledge and magnify the Theocracy which he believed was established as the government of the city. "Florence! Behold!" he cried to the vast multitude, as he lifted up the crucifix. "This is the lord of the universe,

and would fain be thine. Wilt thou have him for thy King?" Thereupon all asserted in a loud voice, and many with tears, crying, "Long live Christ our King." No man has ever failed in the Christian ministry who has inspired a whole people, even for an hour, to aspire to be subject to the sovereignty of Christ.

From Savonarola to Calvin is only a few years as we count time, but in the course of a single generation Luther had arisen, and with one great phrase—Justification by Faith—had changed the politics of the greater part of Europe. Luther is a fascinating personality and belongs, if ever man did, to the romance of preaching. One may cherish unlimited admiration for his war against a soulless and corrupt ecclesiasticism, while lamenting the fact that in the terrible period of the Peasants' Revolt he did not see his way clearly, and apply his Gospel principles with equal consistency to secure freedom and justice for those from whose ranks he himself had sprung. It is the more to be wondered at because Martin Luther was the most

human of beings, full of the milk of human kindness, devoted to wife and children, overflowing with laughter and humour, genial, quick-tempered, shrewd and passionately fond of music. On many sides of his character he was far more attractive and humane than the preacher of Geneva whose intense intellectual ministry I shall invite you to consider now. John Calvin is usually spoken of as the typical dogmatist; yet it was he who was responsible for the trenchant saying, "He is a fool who never has a doubt." Walter Bagehot objected to Voltaire's writings because, he said, nothing could possibly be quite so clear as Voltaire makes it. The man who does not realize the mystery of life and the universe explains nothing, and cannot really be an intellectual leader. We live in a queer world, but logic is not the key that unlocks the mystery of it. Calvin would have governed the world of the spirit by rule of logic, and the world of affairs by rule of thumb.

Neither experiment was a complete success. That he did such extraordinary things in the course of a life broken by ill-health and

environed with every kind of danger and trial, is due to the fact that he himself was so much greater than his system. Let it be remembered that he completed the "Institutes" when he was twenty-four or twenty-five years of age, and probably began the task when he was not more than twenty-three. We are very wise at twenty-three, and see things much more clearly and definitely then than we do when we are twice the age. But I am one of Calvin's warmest admirers who believe with Mark Pattison that "his great merit lies in his comparative neglect of dogma," though I confess I sometimes gaze at the fifty-three octavo volumes of the Edinburgh edition of his collected theological works and vaguely wonder, if these represent a "comparative neglect of dogma," what would have happened to us if he had not neglected it. Let me, however, strike the key-note of Calvin's life and ministry by quoting Pattison's pregnant words: "Calvin seized the idea of reformation as a real renovation of character." While the German reformers were scholastically engaged in re-

modelling abstract metaphysical statements, Calvin had embraced the lofty idea of the Church of Christ as a society of regenerate men. The moral purification of humanity as the original idea of Christianity is the guiding idea of his system. The Communion of Saints is held together by a moral, not by a metaphysical, still less by a sacramental bond! That statement, I think, cannot be overthrown; and it explains why John Calvin appears in Europe as a new apostle with a new message.

To pass from Savonarola to Calvin is to pass from a volcano sending forth torrents of molten lava to a well-contained and well-controlled furnace, whose fires are more effective because they are more disciplined. The volcanic eruptions on the other hand are far more picturesque, sensational and awe-inspiring. Calvin knew none of the paroxysms of the monk of Florence; and in saying that I must not be understood to mean that the one type of ministry discredits the other; but only that once again inspiration is following a law of adaptation. From Savonarola to

Calvin is from rhetoric to logic; and nobody can read with intelligence this epoch of world history without realizing that Protestantism needed at the moment not rhetoric but reason. Moreover Protestantism had yet to show the world that it stood, not only for a more rational theology, and a simpler worship, but for a purer ethics and a sounder morality.

John Calvin went to Geneva to make a great experiment. He believed that a preacher of the Evangel might create and inspire a church, which should in turn become the instrument of freedom and righteousness in the civic life of the city. He had it in view throughout, to make Geneva central to the whole Protestant movement; and its citizenship so compact, united and resolved that the city would stand secure against all enemies. I would that every preacher setting out upon his life-work could have within him John Calvin's sense of destiny. Everybody knows how he resisted the call to Geneva, believing that his own work was in the study rather than in the market-place.

and how Farel stood over him and with prophetic vehemence pronounced a curse upon his studies if he came not to the help of the Lord in Geneva. Calvin yielded to a resistless conviction of destiny and always felt that the Almighty had shut him into Geneva and locked the gates behind him. Even when at first the Genevans, alarmed at his moral strictness, drove him forth from their midst, with violence of hatred which shook Calvin's sensitive soul to its centre, the Will and the Sovereignty which were to become the foundation of his creed appointed his return, and elected him to be the mouthpiece of God to the city where, in the main, he ruled and taught until his death at the age of fifty-four, and lies buried in a grave which by his own wish is marked by no stone, and is as unknown to-day as the grave of Moses upon Nebo.

I am often compelled to contrast the sense of destiny, or what we speak of as our "call," as it affected these fathers of ours and as it affects ourselves. We speak almost invariably of a call to a church; they spoke of a call to a city. We are told all the circum-

stances that make a particular church a desirable sphere of settlement; its income, its position, its social amenities, its agreeable office-bearers and pewholders. Our responsibilty is to a special flock, whose sheep are known by name, and duly enrolled as such on the church books. But the destiny of our forefathers was to the population of a whole community. Their message was for a city. Their responsibility was for the souls of all people within the city gates, or the borders of the township. They were conscious of a pastoral relation between themselves and the most obscure citizen of the poorest court in the city. It was this fact that interested them so keenly in the city problems—how their community, little or large, was governed; the conditions of life that prevailed; the temptations to vice, luxury and crime that lowered the standard of morals. They, the preachers, were to take the field for public righteousness as well as for religious truth. I ask you to reflect what must be the effect on preaching of this wider and deeper sense of responsibility to one's fellows. I would

give anything in my power to get it back again for the modern ministry. A sense of responsibility to a church may be a very noble feeling; but a sense of destiny to a city, a town or a village is a far greater thing. Remember we are not Christ's ministers because we are called by a church; we are ministers of the people because we are called by Christ. It is the call of God we need to be conscious of in our hearts and in our ears. A minister in England or in America will talk about his call to the First Congregational Church, or to such and such a meeting-house; while the missionary more wisely inspired, or more greatly daring, will speak about his call to China or to Africa. It is the greatest thing in life when you can hear not only Christian voices calling you, but voices of those whose souls are dark or dead within them but who need all the more the message and the ministry that by God's grace you are able to give. John Calvin will achieve his greatest modern triumph, when he thus deepens and greatens the preacher's sense of destiny.

Students of Calvin's sermons and writings

will see for themselves how admirably the instrument he employed was adapted to the kind of constructive work he set out to do. Members of congregations will note with relief that he evidently believed in short sermons; indeed he had no patience, as he said, with a prolix style. Men have called him by almost every depreciatory epithet, but, those fifty-three octavo volumes notwithstanding, nobody will truthfully call him "wordy." Seldom will you read anywhere, discourses with less of illustration or ornamentation which are yet more penetrating and pertinent. There are no chasings on the blade of his sword. It is plain, keen steel, and with what an edge! Calvin's style of address was, we are told, somewhat slow and measured. For one thing he was a martyr to asthma, and often breathless in the pulpit and before the council. It can be said of him, as it can be said of very few, that he spoke literature. Strong, stately, lucid, nervous, his sentences carry you forward from point to point of his argument. Little wonder that the French school books of to-day should point to Calvin as one

of the supreme masters and even makers of the French language, and should describe his style as an "admirable instrument of discourse and of affairs."

It is remarkable that one who was so scholarly in all his tastes should be the determined champion of extempore preaching. Indeed he went so far as to declare that the power of God could only pour itself forth in extempore speech. His criticism of the Anglican Church, in his letter to Somerset, was, "There is too little of *living preaching* in your kingdom. . . . You fear that levity and foolish imaginations might be the consequence of the introduction of a new system. But all this must yield to the command of Christ which orders the *preaching* of the Gospel." He never ceased to insist that out of the fullness of the heart the mouth must speak; and in one fine passage, with which I may perhaps conclude this part of my lecture, he uses these memorable words, "It is not said without reason that Jesus Christ 'shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and slay the wicked with the breath

of His lips.' This is the means by which the Lord will bind and destroy all His enemies, and hence the Gospel is called the Kingdom of God. Although the edicts and laws therefore of princes are good auxiliaries for the support of Christianity, God will make His dominion known by the spiritual sword of His Word, proclaimed by His ministers and preachers." Whatever their faults may have been these Reformation fathers believed absolutely in the power of the preachéd word.

Before I say a word of summary, let me detain you very briefly before the portrait of John Knox, who united to the statesmanship of Calvin the fiery eloquence of Savonarola. Perhaps I cannot introduce the man and his mission better than in the words of the greatest of Scottish historians. "The whole fabric," writes Robertson, "which ignorance and superstition had erected in times of darkness began to totter; and nothing was wanting to complete its ruin but a daring and active leader to direct the attack. Such was the famous John Knox, who with better qualifications of learning, and more extensive views

than any of his predecessors in Scotland, possessed a natural intrepidity of mind which set him above fear." I agree with every word of that last sentence unless it be the word "natural." Knox insists that he was by nature a coward; and personally I have no difficulty in believing that "supernatural intrepidity" would be the more truthful phrase. It will interest you to observe that he too was *driven* into his eventful work against his own will and inclination. He, like Calvin, was an example of a man worsted in the fight against the Divine decree; wrestling against the good angel of his destiny and being prevailed over to the endless advantage of all subsequent generations.

After the martyrdom of the saintly Wishart, the Protestants in St. Andrews were resolved that Knox should take up the office of preacher. He refused again and again. Then John Rough, who afterwards perished at the stake at Smithfield, dealt as faithfully with Knox as Farel had done with Calvin, charging him "to refuse not this holy vocation . . . as you look to avoid God's

heavy displeasure." Knox went out from the presence of John Rough to fight the battle out with his own soul, and "his countenance did sufficiently declare the grief and trouble of his heart." Finally he bowed to the declared Will, as a mighty tree bends before a mightier storm. Four months later the preacher of St. Andrews, the hope of the Reform movement in Scotland, was chained to a French galley, and for nineteen weary and desperate months tasted the French lash, labouring at the oar on the stormy north seas. But he had received his "call"; he had realized his "election," and no mutations of fortune could ever affect his sense of predestination to the task of delivering Scotland from superstition. It is just as well to meditate while we can, on the strength and stability which that old Calvinistic conception of God's sovereign purpose gave to the preachers who saw their own destiny in the light of it.

Sometimes, when I realize what trifling infirmities we allow to interrupt our appointed work for the Master, I reflect on such men as Knox with wholesome shame. With what

ardour and zeal he wore himself out in the arduous campaign! Listen to this, of a certain James Melville, who had the eye and ear of a born reporter. "Of all the benefits I had that year [1571] was the coming of that most notable prophet and apostle of our nation, Mister John Knox, to St. Andrews. I heard him teach there the prophecies of Daniel, that summer and winter following. I had my pen and little book and took away sic things as I could comprehend. In the opening of his text he was moderate the space of half an hour; but when he entered to application he made me so to grue and tremble that I could not hold the pen to write." Mr. Melville goes on to tell us that at the time Knox was so ill and weak that he had to be assisted to the church and actually lifted into the pulpit, "where he behoved to lean at his first entrie," "but ere he was done with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding [beat] the pulpit into blads [pieces], and fly out of it." Such was the victory of the spirit over the flesh. If only young preachers knew to-day the power of a "mighty application" of their

sermons, and the supreme art of training all their guns upon actual temptations and tendencies, upon actual sins and selfishnesses of their hearers, we should not have as much cause as we have, to lament the decline of pulpit influence and authority.

I have no time to dwell on the prowess of this heroic soul in holding out for God against a crafty hierarchy, a turbulent nobility, and the most dangerous Royalty in the world. The destiny of Scotland was in the scales; and under God, its freedom depended upon the fact that John Knox was no sentimental and effeminate champion of the new doctrine. Preachers have many temptations to be unfaithful to the truth; but John Knox had that to resist which had sapped the integrity, and compromised the virtue of some whom Scotland esteemed most loyal to the Evangelical faith. You remember Swinburne's lines on Mary Queen of Scots:

> "O diamond heart, unflawed and clear,
> The whole world's gleaming jewel,
> Was ever heart so deadly dear,
> So cruel!"

Mary was the cleverest, as well as the most beautiful of Rome's apologists. To the task of outmanœuvring and routing Knox and his army of peasant Protestants, she dedicated all her wit and all her graces. She flattered, she threatened, she cajoled; she tried laughter, she tried tears. She could not believe that one man's conscience—and he of simple stock—could be proof against the wiles and the charms of the fairest queen in Christendom. But the one man she could not with all her craft hoodwink or bamboozle, was the Edinburgh preacher who never mistook her character, or was deceived by her artifice. Well might Mary exclaim in that famous interview, "I perceive that my subjects shall obey you and not me." History has it on record, that as John Knox passed out from the royal presence, the whisper went round, "He is not afraid," whereupon he replied, "with a reasonably merry countenance," "Wherefore should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman affray me? I have looked upon the faces of many angry men and yet have not been affrayed beyond measure."

It is certain that the Christian minister who would be faithful to his trust, must yield neither to stern looks nor to soft speeches. Most of us can muster enough manhood, when we are put to it, to stand up against unworthy frowns. We have not always the courage that is proof against the seducing smiles of fashion, or wealth, or rank. Especially, we have not the insight of Knox, to whom external position was nothing, and the only reality that of the mind and soul. Good women are the most precious of all Heaven's gifts to the Church. We may well thank God for all there are, who devote the unique genius of their womanliness to the interests of faith and virtue. But there is need of just such a story as the one Scotland cherishes, to teach us all, betimes, that everything is not necessarily angelic that looks like it ; and that the most difficult, delicate and dangerous of all controversies is, when Truth finds itself in opposition to Error, Superstition and Vice arrayed in the most attractive and alluring guise, and when the whisper of siren voices may seduce even the best-

intentioned voyager, from the integrity of his course.

I have put these three preaching ministries together, because they are supreme examples of the power which the man of the Gospel can exercise in shaping the civic and national life of free peoples. They were all preachers of a puritan spirit. It is probable they made mistakes, and ever since have been the objects of the slighting criticisms of those, who have made few mistakes because they have attempted few enterprises. What the world owes to the example of Savonarola, to the constructive thinking of Calvin, and to the statesmanship of Knox, can never be told. Thanks to them, and to others whom I cannot stay to commemorate, we have come to hold that the ideal State is as much a fruit of the Gospel as the ideal Church. Any errors they may have committed, are far more than compensated for, by the priceless witness which they bore to the sovereignty of Christ over all mundane affairs. Of course they were buffeted and bruised, as all must be who descend into the

arena. Of course they tasted to the full the reproaches, calumnies, and cruelties of those who repudiate the authority of the Christian preacher, save in matters of abstract faith alone. But I do not imagine that if they had their lives to live over again, and knew quite well the sufferings and disappointments that awaited them, they would choose differently. For there is, as Carlyle said, no victory but by battle. There is no crown but by the cross. There is no triumph for the preacher save as he pledges himself to the kingdom of God, and makes himself the willing instrument of that resistless Will which shall yet, in obedience to our Master's prayer, be done *on earth* as it is done in heaven.

LECTURE VI

THE FOUNDERS OF FREEDOM: JOHN ROBINSON AND THE PILGRIM FATHERS

LIBRARY.

LECTURE VI

THE FOUNDERS OF FREEDOM: JOHN ROBINSON AND THE PILGRIM FATHERS

THE Gospel is more than a great faith; it is a great adventure. Its news is so good that it must be carried everywhere at all hazards. The most thrilling pages in Christian history describe the enterprise of the Evangel.

When a leading English Review, that has a reputation for cynicism, some time ago described the missionary movement, its cynicism gave way to genuine enthusiasm. "They have kept alive at the heart of a selfish and materialized culture," it declared of our missionaries, "a genuine heroic tradition"; and went on to say that there were few families of note in England that had not made some contribution to the army of missionary martyrs, and that "all the ends of the earth are hallowed by their graves." No man can

read such records without emotion and pride. There is no history to compare with it, nor ever can be. It is something to realize in these days that unselfishness can devise and achieve greater things than selfishness ever can. We all know that science and commerce have inspired expeditions which have filled the world with admiration; but the simple truth is, that the adventures inspired by the disinterestedness of Christian evangelists, have thrown all other enterprises into the shade.

There have been many types of missionary preachers and missionary adventures. Much that is best in America to-day, derives from a pilgrim race. In the words of Mr. Lowell, they crossed the Atlantic "to plant their idea in virgin soil." They may not have looked romantic. Shovel hats and long black cloaks do not compare in picturesqueness with the embroidered raiment of the cavalier heroes of Vandyck. Yet these men and women, so prim and demure of outward aspect, set forth on the most astonishing of adventures, reading their destiny west-

ward in the heaven of their ideals, and by the good hand of God prospering them, sowing the world with free commonwealths. A clever modern novelist has invented for us the title, "The Belovéd Vagabond." It might have stood for a description of the *Mayflower*. You may read on a tomb in that spellbound burial-place at Plymouth, part of an address delivered by a preacher whose body rests beneath. He describes his associates as "my beloved adventurers." That great writer, Professor Seeley, says, "Religion alone can turn emigration into exodus." Who shall define or describe the mystic determining impulse that drove the Pilgrims into the wild, to make a home for faith and freedom? Had they any prescience of the greatness of the goal? Did they, too, see an Abrahamic vision of a seed as the stars innumerable, for those who would go forth not knowing whither, but content to follow the gleam? Did they say, when the winds of heaven filled their sails and bare them far from friends and fatherland, "the spirit driveth us into the wilderness"?

Were they all equally clear that the Will of God was with them, and that in the Book of Destiny their names were written as the humble pioneers of a new world and a new order? Were all hearts westward and forward, and all minds constant in their resolve? Did none nourish a treacherous appetite for the flesh-pots of Europe, murmur at the discouragements of the journey,

"Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?"

How gladly would we know more than we do, or ever can, of the details of that golden romance, which surely, outside the pages of the New Testament, is the greatest story in the world!

Savonarola ruled Florence, Calvin ruled Geneva, John Knox ruled the realm of Scotland. Each in measure asserted the authority of Christ over a turbulent and sometimes rebellious population. Their difficulty was that they were compelled to put new wine into old bottles, until new bottles could be wrought and shaped for the new wine. The Pilgrim Fathers would have a new bottle for

their new wine. They demanded a free commonwealth suited to their free ideals of worship, and of citizenship. They could not be content to graft their new branch on the old decayed stock, where it must be overshadowed by all the other branches that bare fruit of so doubtful a flavour. For the most part they were business people who found Leyden a tolerable town to thrive in. But their religion made them restless. The Promised Land was in their hearts. The more John Robinson preached to them of the primitive church, and the destiny of the kingdom, the less they were satisfied with the compromise-society which alone was possible to them where they were. We may perhaps be thankful that the result of faithful and real preaching is not always, as in the case of John Robinson, that the congregation arise and flee. But I confess I always suspect my own preaching of weakness if it does not make many young people uncomfortable, and compel them to become missionaries of the ideal, even at some considerable sacrifice. "Will you be content," argued

John Robinson in effect, "to go down to your graves with your witness undelivered, and your bravest hopes unattempted? Or will you risk something, nay everything, to translate your theories of Christian freedom into a veritable free society?" The problem of Savonarola, Calvin, Knox, was whether the preachéd word was powerful enough to transform and convert an old order. The problem of John Robinson and the Pilgrims, was whether the preachéd word was powerful enough to create and establish a new one.

Before I come to a somewhat closer study of the man and his ideals who inspired one of the world's most momentous enterprises by his preaching, I shall ask you to spare a thought for that revival of preaching which marked the heroic age, in which the mind of England was turned permanently Protestant. I say the *mind* of England, for no serious student believes that we were made Protestant by the domestic vagaries of Henry VIII. We were made Protestant by an open Bible, and its prophets. One lesson had been taught by the ballads of Chaucer, and the

visions of Piers Plowman, and was reënforced afterwards by the tracts of Martin Marprelate, that *to win the ear of the people you must talk their language.* To popularize the Reformation and its new religious ideals, it was necessary that preachers should arise who thought in the vernacular, and who seasoned their speech with the salt of such homely words and phrases, as made Tyndale's Bible understanded not only by the college-bred, but by the smith at the anvil, and the labourer behind the plough.

When Hugh Latimer began to teach the new doctrine from St. Paul's Cross, every London apprentice knew and relished his message. After all, is not this one of the signs of a new Pentecost, "We did hear tell *in our own tongue* the wonderful works of God"? There is a saying of Jesus that we shall all do well to lay to heart: "What I tell you in secret, that publish ye on the housetop." Christianity is every man's religion; and therefore can be translated without loss into the language of the street. It is a religion for the open air. It is a religion

that does not suffer by being brought home to the conscience and reason of simple folk. It is susceptible of learned philosophical statement, I doubt not, satisfying to the greatest and profoundest thinkers, but John Ruskin once said, with the touch of exaggeration characteristic of him, "What a little child cannot understand of Christianity, nobody else need try to." The essential Protestant faith captured the ear and the heart of sixteenth-century London, through the pithy pregnant Saxon speech of Latimer, with his command of laughter and tears.

He presented the citizen in the street with a plain man's religion. He spoke it as simply, I say it with reverence, as the Saviour spoke to the peasants in the fields of Judea, or the fishermen by the Galilean lakes. He did not so much appeal to the theologically-trained mind; and he certainly did not appeal to any sense of ecclesiastical authority. He appealed to common sense; he appealed to the instincts of the multitude. He appealed to their love of justice and of humanity. There never was a more human

being than Hugh Latimer. The people well know the men who love them, believe in them, and understand them. The sheep hear the voice of the true shepherd. London has always been a city with much that is artificial and materialistic in its complicated cosmopolitan life; and no one ever held the key of its affections who was not a true man. Latimer's preaching is oratory stripped of all that is meretricious, and oratory that is not sterilized by conventionality. No timid, stilted pulpiteer, who has never learned that grace is more than grammar, and that to win your hearers, you may break every pulpit convention that was ever designed by a sleek respectability to keep our volcanic Gospel within the bonds of decency and order, will ever capture the soul of a great city, or speak with a voice that will ring in the hearts of a free people. And if Latimer knew the secret, another knew it who is worthy to be named with him—that passionate pilgrim of the Puritanism which was only Latimer's Protestantism become logical and thorough—I mean John Penry. They burned

Latimer at Oxford, and hanged Penry on a gibbet in the Old Kent Road; but not till these men and others like-minded had set England on fire. For one thing, they had shed their blood for freedom of thought and freedom of speech, and no martyr has ever died for those sacred principles in vain. The preacher's very existence was at stake in the controversy, whether religion was to consist of prayers and offices rendered in a foreign tongue, or the truths which free men were to think and speak in their own free speech. In the former system the prophet has no place; in the latter system he is the most precious possession of his age.

I hope I shall not weary you by insistence on this point; but the tendency of theology to become an esoteric philosophy, full of technical terms understanded only by the experts, has the inevitable effect that its professors and teachers lose touch with life. Always the preacher must be a man of his time. His business is to restate the eternal message of salvation in the terms of to-day. Chaste and cultured archaisms are pleasant

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to the palate of the scholar ; but the Gospel is for the people, and we need more than anything else, men of the people who know their needs and their thoughts, and can make the Evangel, what it eternally is, the property and heritage of the simple and the poor. Some of you will recall, by way of illustration, the scathing satires of Erasmus on the scholastic theologians and preachers who, in his time, made it their business to cultivate a reputation for erudition and profundity, by talking in words that the vulgar could not understand. This is a specimen which Erasmus gives of the teaching of these inflated doctrinaires. "They say that 'person' does not signify relation of origin, but duplex negation of communicability *in genere*, that is, it connotes something positive, and is a noun of the first instance, not the second. They say the persons of the Divine Nature exist reciprocally by circumincession, and circumincession is when a thing subsists really in something else which is really distinct, by the mutual assistance of presentiality in the same essence." After reading two or three

lines of that kind of thing, you feel as if you were in a lunatic asylum. Do you wonder that men and women sickened and wearied of it? And do you wonder that the Reformation preachers brought a veritable new revelation to the world when they read out to the common people such great simple words as these, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me"? If Tyndale had done nothing else by his translation of the Bible he had taught us for all time that there is no more dignified and majestic diction than the simple speech of the common people.

I cannot explain to you just why it is, that the true prophet is always a master of simple speech, but it is certain that no man can speak home to the hearts of his fellow-men without it. Inasmuch as the Reformation was a return to the natural and to the human from the artificial and the scholastic, it did more than change the world's history, it revived the order of prophets, and it created a literature. From Hugh Latimer and John Penry, to Daniel Defoe and John Bunyan, you

can read the influence of the Reformation in bringing religion back to life, and making it the inspiration of the common people.

After all, it was but natural that the Puritan preacher with his love of reality, should be impatient of the mere tricks and artifices borrowed from the demagogue. The Richard Bernard who was only "almost persuaded" to become a pilgrim, and just missed immortality thereby, dealt out wholesome warnings to young preachers in his book entitled "The Faithful Shepherd." How he satirizes those brethren who, as Mr. Spurgeon used to say, "mistake perspiration for inspiration," and try to produce an impression by violence which could not be produced by the weight of their argument! Some forward ones, he declares, are "moved to violent motions as casting abroad of their arms, smiting on the pulpit, lifting themselves up, and again suddenly stamping down." Others "through too great feare and bashfulness which causeth hemmings, spittings, rubbing the browes, lifting up of the shoulders, nodding of the head, taking often hold of the cloake or gown,

fiddling with the fingers upon the breast buttons, stroaking of the beard and such-like toies." There is sound sense as well as humour, in this attempt to put us on our guard against ridiculous and meaningless nervous gestures which distract and annoy the most indulgent of our hearers, and add nothing to our power. It is always easier in this matter to enforce the truth by precept than by practice; but nothing is more certain than that the man who has learned early the right modulation of the voice, and to be content with those simple gestures which are natural and dignified, has mastered what is fundamental to the art of pulpit oratory.

That this was no chance judgment of some isolated Puritan divine, but one common to all in that generation, may be further gathered from an excellent passage in one of John Robinson's forceful writings. "As a woman, over-curiously trimmed, is to be suspected, so is a speech. And indeed he that goes about by eloquence, without firm ground of reason to persuade, goes about to deceive. As some are large in speech out of

abundance of matter and upon due consideration, so the most multiply words either from weakness or vanity. Some excuse their tediousness, saying that they cannot speak shorter, which is all one as if they said that they have unbridled tongues and inordinate passions setting them a-work. I have been many times drawn so dry, that I could not well speak any longer for want of matter; but I could ever speak as short as I would." I ask you, could the thing be better put? Could there be a better comparison than this of a highly-rhetorical speech or sermon to "a woman, over-curiously trimmed"? Have we not had to listen to many discourses where you could not see the dress for the trimmings? It may be impossible to lay down any canons of good taste in this matter, but I shall venture to submit to you, that the Puritan frugality of illustration and adornment, is far more effective than the prodigality and even profligacy of quotation and ornament which is sometimes popular among us to-day, and which may dazzle, but does not really subdue and persuade an audience.

Nevertheless, you are not to suppose that John Robinson could not estimate the worth and value of apposite and pointed illustration. Dr. John Brown has borne testimony to the wealth of his reading, the catholicity of his range of knowledge. He has discovered quotations from Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Thales, Cicero, Terence, Pliny, Plutarch, Seneca, Epictetus and Suetonius among the classics; among the Fathers, from Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory Nazienzen, Lactantius, Jerome, Basil and Eusebius; among later writers, from Bernard, Anselm, Scaliger, Beza, Erasmus and Melancthon, as well as his own contemporaries. This renowned preacher and scholar, who was to inspire men and women to attempt and achieve one of the most heroic tasks in history, was a man steeped in literature, who had wrestled in his study with great themes, who had sat at the feet of men of mind of all schools and generations, whose culture was as catholic as his sympathies were wide, and who yet, as Tennyson says, "wore his weight of learning lightly as a flower,"

and never lost touch with his fellows, or gave up to academic ambition what was meant for mankind. Had it been otherwise, he might have become a walking encyclopædia, but never the mainspring of that gallant adventure which planted a free church on a free soil.

The more I study the personality and the preaching of John Robinson, the less I wonder at the spirit and exploits of the community whose members owed everything to his inspiration. Under the strongest temptations to intolerance, he maintained a generous temper and a broad Christian outlook. He was immovably firm in the maintenance of principles, but even his controversial utterances are distinguished by a large charity that lifts him above his time. And I cannot be wrong in arguing, that his ministry bears the marks upon it of the influence of his church, which was almost alone among the separatist communities of the time in its freedom from unworthy partisanship, and the frictions and bickerings which are the fruits of jealousy and pedantry. I imagine John

Robinson would have found it difficult to decide whether his people owed most to his preaching, or his preaching owed most to his people. One has the feeling that such a church would have made almost any preacher eloquent ; yet again, one is driven to conclude that such a preacher would have created a true church out of almost any material. The fact of the matter is, of course, that the atmosphere of faith and prayer does make good preaching inevitable, whereas the attitude of suspicion and criticism will "freeze the genial current of the soul," and give to any earnest and spiritual minister a sense of labouring at the oar to no purpose.

It is not possible to leave out of account that many preachers are called to preach to the worldly, the unbelieving, the indifferent and the hostile ; and we should be contradicting some of the most glorious facts in Christian history, if we did not recognize that God does not leave His witnesses alone when they go forth on His errands, no matter how difficult the journey. But it is almost impossible to separate John Robinson from the church

he loved so deeply, and which loved him with equal intensity and constancy. He was just one of the members of the body, deriving health and power from his vital relation to all the rest, and communicating his own life and strength to them. When he spoke to this outside world, when he put pen to paper, when he became a champion in controversy, and a defender of his faith and people, it was not he alone who spoke. The whole church seemed to become eloquent in and through him. Equally impressive is it, that the church members to whom he gave his blessing, and a double portion of his spirit, seemed to reproduce his faith, courage and charity when far from his presence.

Leagues of tempestuous Atlantic waters never separated people and pastor in ideal or in fellowship. Still the mystic spiritual tie held. Still they thought together, and prayed together, and aspired together, and wrought together. It was as if he, their pastor, were present at every council meeting, was a guest in every cabin, prayed at the bedside of the dying, joined the hands of the newly-wed,

and committed those who died in Christ to their last resting place in the forest. Of all the blows that fell one by one upon that struggling Pilgrim community in the bitter heroic days, when death and famine seemed their most familiar acquaintances, the most crushing and heart-breaking was the news of the death of their beloved pastor ; and every soul in Plymouth colony felt as if his father had fallen, and sorrowed most of all, that they should see his face no more.

We have got to believe more than we do, in this sacred coöperation of preacher and people. We shall have no ideal preachers in the pulpit, unless and until we have ideal hearers in the pew. For conquests that will startle and awaken the world, the need will always be for prophet spirits who are sustained and illuminated by their contact with a society of consecrated souls. It is all very well to lecture students for the ministry on the vocation and equipment of the preacher, or on the ideal of his calling, but in sober truth, such lectures ought from time to time to be delivered to the officers and members

of churches and congregations. *They* make or mar the ministry. They encourage or discourage the preacher. They make it possible for him to be at his best, and impossible for his arrows to miss the mark. They create the atmosphere in which faith can live, and doubt cannot. They arm him for unseen conflicts, and protect him by their prayers from insidious attacks on his moral integrity. Moreover, it is they who multiply his message, translate it into living fact and deed, and so give power and effect to his ministry. Let it never be forgotten that modern America sprang out of the ideal relation between a pastor and a church; a man of God and a people of God.

Let it never be forgotten that the problem was thought out in church meeting, and the enterprise planned and adopted within the atmosphere of a Christian assembly. It was there, while men and women pleaded for light, and for faith to walk in it, that the spirit of illumination was vouchsafed, under whose gracious guidance the yoke became easy and the burden light. Together, while

the prophet-leader saw his vision, and the people kindled to it, they became equal to the sacrifice, and confident of the Will and the Way. I cannot analyze how much of those faithful discourses that will stir men's souls to the end of time, was due to the rapt and resolute faces of simple heroes and heroines that were upturned to meet his gaze, and how much of their exaltation and enthusiasm was due to their contact with a soul in which indubitably dwelt Divine insight and fire; I only know that their sublime *coöperation* made the westward track of the *Mayflower* plain, and wrote the new Book of Genesis in the Bible of human destiny.

Forgive me if I linger lovingly on these familiar scenes, so big with fate, and so weighty with instruction. The preacher who has not pondered over these origins of New England's history, must blame himself if he has missed much inspiration for his own work. The part played by Moses in the days of the Jewish exodus towards the Land of Promise is not one wit more notable or significant than the part played by John Robin-

son in the exodus that ended in this land of promise. I might spare a moment or two for examples of his genius in the employment of rare and suggestive texts of Scripture, and his skill in turning out-of-the-way incidents in Bible narratives to profitable account. There are many seemingly desert places in Scripture, that a preacher who knows his Bible, can make to blossom like the rose. Not that there was any strained ingenuity about John Robinson's way with texts. But who would forget that text out of the Book of Samuel from which he preached on the special day set apart for inquiring the mind of the spirit as to this enterprise, "And David's men said unto him, Behold we be afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand." Among all your New England towns to-day, I wonder if there is one named Keilah; and if not, whether it is too late to supply the

omission? Unless all reports lie, there are still enough Philistines left to justify the experiment.

Then on the ever-memorable day when he preached to the Pilgrims for the last time, the sermon that has become an imperishable legacy for all forward souls, he found his text in the Book of Ezra, "I proclaimed a fast there at the river Ahava that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of Him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance." Think how these felicitous words must have accomplished their purpose, which was to provoke to new fervour of prayer and faith those who at the crisis of their fate still needed to be assured that theirs was a God-prompted and God-guided enterprise. Often, when I study the preaching of our fathers, I am impressed by the fact that they knew their Bibles better than we do. They had less of the light of criticism, but they had, I think, notwithstanding, a more exact knowledge of Holy Writ. To-day this great territory of Scripture is like a modern continent; extreme and

unhealthy congestion at certain well-known centres, and vast tracts of country uncultivated and unknown. How many of those listening to me have been led against the "Philistines at Keilah," or have heard "a fast proclaimed at the river Ahava"?

Perhaps we flatter ourselves that if we had part and lot in so wonderful a movement we, too, should be moved to search the Scriptures, and to uncover some of their hidden gems of price. But that is to harbour an undeveloped imagination. Every hour of assembly is a time big with destiny. Every Sunday men and women go forth from the tryst with God to face measureless possibilities. Suppose that you and I, who have the unspeakable privilege of interpreting the book of life, realized that the men and women we are addressing are as capable of disinterested sacrifices and noble exploits as their progenitors at Leyden; and that before a week is out some of them may have launched their *Mayflower*, and embraced a God-given adventure, with what emotion would our speech to them be charged? If we fail, it is because

we do not see the possibilities latent in what we call an "ordinary congregation." No assembling of ourselves together to meet with Christ can ever be "ordinary." That is only a fashion of speech. We say sometimes, "It was just an ordinary service." If we have ceased to expect extraordinary manifestations of God's power, and revelations of His will—that our young men should see visions and our old men dream dreams—why is it? It was just as possible that your fathers at Leyden should say "Yes" or "No" to the beckoning hand of their divine destiny, as that we should accept or reject the higher Will for our own. There was no single element present at their fateful assembly in their Leyden meeting-house, that may not be present at any hour of worship in these days, and in the land of their adoption. All that is necessary for us to repeat their enterprises and achievements, is soul enough to believe in God's will and to surrender to His leadership.

I am impressed by the fact, that the last picture of their beloved minister which the Pilgrims carried with them to their promised

land, was the one so simply and vividly described by the historian of their enterprise. "The tide—which stays for no man—calling them away, that were thus loth to depart, their Reverend Pastor, falling down on his knees, and they all with him, with watery cheeks, commended them with most fervent prayers unto the Lord and His blessing." I suspect that we have all at times felt what we call the burden of extempore prayer. But I am certain that the soul of the prophet is most surely and powerfully revealed in his prayers. To speak to men of God is a high privilege. There is perhaps one higher: it is to speak to God for men. I do not doubt that many a great saying of John Robinson lingered in the memories of his pilgrim flock, and was recalled under the pine-trees and behind the stockades in their new settlement.

But assuredly the most sacred recollection of all, was of his tender and loving intercessions on their behalf; and they came to feel that the greatest moments in their lives, were those ever-memorable ones when that prophet-spirit talked with God, and they saw

heaven open, and heard things scarce lawful for man to hear. God forgive us that our pulpit prayers tend to become so formal, and even unreal! For this is the sublimest office the minister of the Kingdom is called to fulfill. It is out of such spirit of communion and sacred intercourse with Deity that the pilgrim ambition is born, and the pilgrim vow sealed and ratified. Nay, I go further. It is in our prayers that our real ideals and hopes for our people are revealed. If we have great aspirations for them; if in our personal desire we destine them to sacrificial service; if we so love them as to cherish for them the glory and honour of the God-dedicated and forward-moving life, they will make the discovery in our prayers. For it is in our prayers that the deeps of the soul are uncovered, and the passionate yearnings of the true minister for his people make themselves known. That is a great adjective which Scripture applies to the fervent prayers of a good man. They are "energizing." They charge receptive souls with new and sublime forces. They reëstablish broken or

imperfect connections with the source of Divine power. They baptize the waiting, willing, listening heart with new vitality. They "energize"—dare I say "electrify"?—the mind. Who can doubt that those who knelt around their spiritual father at Delfthaven, with the rickety ship *Speedwell* lying near as if to remind them of the perils and discomforts of their adventure, were braced and strengthened and "energized" for their deathless task by the fervent applications of that man of God? Let no preacher among us fail to realize the power of inspiration that may communicate itself through his sermons to his congregation; but least of all let him forget that the final stimulus to deeds of faith and devotion will be felt and known by his people in the supreme hour of fervent and energizing prayer.

I must ask you to spare one thought for a feature of the famous expedition on which perhaps we do not often dwell. No minister went with them; that is, no ordained preacher and pastor. Apart from the fragrant memory of their former leader's ministry, they were

dependent on what we sometimes speak of as a "layman's" service. I would like to press Elder Brewster's example upon you, as another and unanswerable argument why we should not deprive ourselves, as we do, of the spiritual wealth of men and women in our churches who have not devoted themselves to the formal ministry, but whose thought and experience would enrich our corporate life. Would to God that all the Lord's servants were prophets! When shall we get away from the paralyzing misconception that a man of affairs is thereby incapacitated from being a spiritual leader? I make no doubt that the meditations of Elder Brewster were all the wiser and nobler that he had many public anxieties to bear, and responsibilities to carry. It ought to be forever symbolical of New England, that the religious spirit was united to the spirit of practical citizenship in him who, unordained of man, assumed spiritual leadership within the pilgrim theocracy.

So the preaching of the Word, and the higher Idealism, resulted in the founding of

a new world "dedicated to the proposition," as Lincoln would say, that Christ's will is the only worthy and wholesome law for a state. To recover that ideal we need a new race of prophets—seers of inspired vision like John Robinson, statesmen of spiritual experience and moral stature like Brewster. How the Pilgrim church created the Pilgrim state; how it drew up as Mr. Bancroft says, "the first instrument conferring equal civil and religious rights on every member of the commonwealth"; how it sought to do the will of God on earth is matter of history. Imperishable as that history is, it is of little worth for the world of to-morrow in comparison with the necessity that her new preachers and spiritual leaders should "highly resolve," that they will bring to the stupendous task of creating yet another "new world" a double portion of the spirit of their sires—the same faith, fortitude and sacred adventure, a like endurance in the teeth of danger, suffering and death, and "an equal temper of heroic hearts."

LECTURE VII

THE PASSION OF EVANGELISM: WESLEY AND WHITEFIELD

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THE problem of the Preacher as evangelist is one of which we are all bound to think, and on which history has much to teach. I shall begin by agreeing that we make far too sharp a division between a ministry that is educational, and a ministry that is evangelistic; and too marked a distinction between a morning service for edifying the saints, and an evening service for evangelizing the sinners. There seems to be no adequate reason why people should take their minds to church in the forenoon, and their souls in the evening. If occasionally more soul were put into the morning sermon, and more mind into the evening sermon, we might improve the quality of the saints and make the conversion of the sinners more permanent. But when that

is said, I shall proceed to state my main proposition with all the force I can command—that it is time all Christian preachers equipped themselves more definitely for evangelistic work, and refused to allow the most vital part of their aggressive policy to be undertaken for them by an order of preachers however able and devoted who have to be called in for the purpose like consulting physicians at a crisis. The ministry that is not an evangelistic ministry is not in the full sense a Christian ministry, for we cannot obey our Lord's command and leave His Divine appeal unuttered to those who are heedless and unresponsive.

But it is equally certain that evangelism, rightly understood, is not as simple a matter as it seems. It is the greatest mistake in the world to imagine that defects in education are a qualification for evangelism; or that, to put it in another way, such an absence of real culture as would disqualify a man for the full work of the ministry might rank as an endowment for his work as an evangelist. I rate the work of evangelism far higher than

that. It is work that demands the best brains we possess; and no training can be too thorough, and no reading too wide for the minister whose aim it is to be to bring the irreligious and the indifferent on to the side of Christ and the Kingdom. We can never forget that it was Paul, the most accomplished and erudite of the apostles, whose soul was fired most with a passion for evangelism before which all the old racial barriers went down like a bowing wall and a tottering fence.

Does anybody suppose that he would have been better fitted for his apostolic work if he had never sat at the feet of Gamaliel? So far from lamenting the catholicity of his culture, we know how much depended upon his ability to become as a Greek to win the Greeks, and as a Roman to win the Romans. I am not prepared to argue that the result of learning is always to widen the sympathies; and that learned men are invariably the most human and versatile of beings. Experience hardly warrants so satisfactory a generalization, and Carlyle's old friend "Dry-as-dust,"

"with loads of learned lumber in his head," does exist even outside novels like "Middlemarch." Indeed, the notorious fact that many profound scholars have been men of narrow sympathies and pedantic opinions, has been responsible for the fear, that one may still hear expressed, lest promising young preachers should be ruined at college by being made too bookish and scholastic. But Paul's example is decisive as to the value, for the work of evangelism, of that generous culture which frankly confesses the debt it owes to Jew and Roman, Greek and Barbarian,—a confession which, in itself, is more than half the victory over those disabling prejudices which prevent a missionary from getting on terms with his audience. It is surely not too much to say that, humanly speaking, no untrained and uncultured man could have done Paul's work among conditions so diverse. The Church of to-day needs to ponder deeply on this fact, that it was the man of most massive intellect and most varied scholarship, who was the first great Christian evangelist.

No one will claim for St. Francis of Assisi

the rank of a scholar; but his education was good as the standard of the time was, and there are no evidences of weakness in that charming intellect which he carried with him through his spiritual pilgrimage to the Italian peasantry. But as to his namesake, Francis de Xavier, there are no deductions to be made. He who was to wear his life out in romantic evangelistic journeying through lands that were at that time the *Ultima Thule* of travel, was educated in the University of Paris, became a lecturer in the Aristotelian philosophy, and might have successfully aspired to almost any position in that academic world, so brilliant were his intellectual talents. One cannot have all the gifts; and even Xavier confesses in his letters that he had no skill in languages, which was the reason why his work had to be done through the difficult medium of an interpreter, and why the legend arose that his deficiencies in this respect were conveniently made good by the gift of tongues. No grammars and dictionaries were available in the strange lands of his voluntary exile; and, had

they been, he had no time for their study. But to a hero of his spirit there was less embarrassment in this deficiency than most men would have suffered. For he had within him the universal language of sympathy and faith, which was the secret of his amazing conquests.

Even in these modern days there is something staggering in the bare record of his phenomenal travels. Fever and peril, by land and sea, had no terrors for him. From Portugal to Mozambique and on to Goa; from Goa to Travancore; from Travancore to Ceylon; from Ceylon to Malacca; from Malacca to Japan; from Japan back again to India, and through that last desperate fight for a foothold in China; we watch this fiery and intrepid evangelist, whose powerful mind was undaunted by the social, moral and religious difficulties which the life of the Orient presented. There are always some people who argue that men of the first rank in intellectual power are thrown away on evangelistic missions, either to the depraved of their own land, or to the habitations of

heathenism. As they watch the academic career of a Henry Martyn till he fulfills the highest ambition of a mathematical scholar at Cambridge University, wins the University prize for Latin composition, is appointed a fellow of his college, and then dedicates his talents to the mission field, they cry in protest, "To what purpose is this waste?" But they do not tell us by what means, or in what career, those brilliant parts of Henry Martyn might better have been unified and concentrated and employed, for the welfare of humanity.

Think of him as Sir James Stephen describes him in his Cambridge days, and before his life decision had been taken. The passage is a famous one: "a man born to love with ardour and to hate with vehemence; amorous, irascible, ambitious and vain; without one torpid nerve about him; aiming at universal excellence in science, in literature, in conversation, in horsemanship and even in dress; not without some gay fancies, but more prone to austere and melancholy thoughts; patient of the most toilsome inquiries, though

not wooing philosophy for her own sake; animated by the poetical temperament, though unvisited by any poetical inspiration; eager for enterprise, though thinking meanly of the reward to which the adventurous aspire; uniting in himself, though as yet unable to concentrate and to harmonize them, many keen desires, many high powers, and much constitutional dejection—the chaotic materials of a great character." Chaotic materials indeed! How the vision came to Henry Martyn, in the light of which this chaos was resolved into order and harmony, and how henceforth he saw his way, and could say with the apostle, "This one thing I do," is the story of his conversion, and his self-dedication to the work of an evangelist. To those whose thoughts are engrossed with secular ambitions, his was a lost life, and he himself the mere victim of a fanaticism that laid waste his powers. But to all who understand what are the real honours to be won on this earth, and the permanent foundations of fame, Henry Martyn's disinterested devotion, and sacrificial labours, belong to those records which

make us proud of our humanity. The beautiful tribute might be paid to him which is engraved on the cenotaph of John Howard the prison reformer, in St. Paul's Cathedral, that "he followed an open but unfrequented pathway to immortality." There were, doubtless, many easier and pleasanter pathways open to him; but his feet followed where his heart and his reason led the way. He had reached what, I often think, is the most profound conviction possible to us, and one which can only be entertained by an intellect that is powerful enough to penetrate to that reality which lies beneath the outward shows of things—the conviction expressed in a passage in his journal written about the natives on his first landing in India, "I feel that they are my brethren in the flesh, precisely on a level with myself." You may put that saying of his side by side with David Livingstone's confession that, after living among and for the native Africans, he forgot that they were black and remembered only that they were fellow-mortals. I repeat, that it does not require a powerful mind to perceive the external

differences between one race and another, but it does require an absolutely just and strong reason to discern the fundamental unity of humanity, and to live in the consciousness of *that*, rather than of any outward distinctions, whether of colour, class or creed. This, indeed, I should be disposed to regard as the most indispensable endowment of the evangelist. The converted prize-fighter, in John Masefield's vivid poem, cries out:

> "I thought that Christ had given me birth
> To brother all the sons of earth."

And surely we may with confidence contend, that this is the purpose and effect of the new birth. The new spirit that is created thereby is one of brotherhood to all the sons of earth without distinction. This is not the language of sentimentalism. It is, once again, a "glory of the lighted mind." It is the fruit of the spirit of justice and equity new-born within the God-surrendered soul. If I were alone in the opinion I should still maintain that the supreme proof of Henry Martyn's intellectual greatness is not to be found in his

New Testament translated into Hindustani, or the Book of Psalms translated into Persian, but rather in the absolute fraternity of spirit which inspired his labours among the beggars of Cawnpore, and the unshaken constancy of purpose which held him faithful through his final painful wanderings, until fever-wasted and shattered by disease, he sank, at the age of thirty-two, into his lonely grave at Tokat. Such was the passion of evangelism which exalted and mastered Henry Martyn, so that the young brow of a famous Cambridge scholar wears, to-day, the aureole of a modern saint; and so that Lord Macaulay was moved to write the well-known lines of him:

> "In manhood's early bloom
> The Christian hero found a pagan tomb;
> Religion, sorrowing o'er her favourite son,
> Points to the glorious trophies which he won.
> Eternal trophies, not with slaughter red,
> Not stained with tears by hopeless captives shed;
> But trophies of the Cross."

But surely we may say that outside the apostolic era, the greatest evangelistic move-

ment was the one that changed the face of England, and gave birth to the new era of missionary expansion and adventure. The breath that filled the sails of the good ship *Duff*—the first distinctively missionary ship that ever sailed the ocean—was in reality that mystic rushing mighty wind which swept over the lifeless soul of England at the great Pentecostal season of the evangelical Revival. The new missionary enterprise was the witness to the reality of this rebirth of the Church. The satisfying proof that the Lord was visiting His people was, that the unknown heathen of Tahiti were seen to be not only as needy, but as worthy of sacrificial service, as their brethren in the neglected villages and city-slums of England. The regenerate churches of Christ, in my own country, could not close their eyes to the vision of a perishing humanity, but fervently believed that Christ had, indeed, given them birth

"To brother all the sons of earth."

Yet if ever evangelism had plausible excuse to offer for concentration, and a narrow-

ing of the area of service, it was at that memorable time. Something that sounded perilously like common-sense took up its parable, and pleaded that, until the work of Christianization was complete at home, it was mere waste of good money and valuable lives to evangelize the far islands of the Pacific. Could Henry Nott find no sphere of work as a city missionary in the East end of London, that he must hazard everything for the Tahitian cannibals? It was, at bottom, the old heresy that would have chained Paul to Jerusalem, and imprisoned Christianity within the narrow limits of Palestine. The old patriotism of the *Jewish* prophet might have persisted, but the new patriotism of the Christian prophet must assuredly have perished. What I have called the epic of world-conquest, would have been no more than a poor attenuated apology for a great poem. The plain fact is, that Christianity cannot fly either a national or a racial flag. It is world-empire or nothing. This is its Romance. The Cross must claim its sway over all continents, islands and oceans,

or its glory is departed. That is why evangelism is so essential in any true interpretation of our religion. It sounds the universal note. It levels, in faith, all barriers. It has a regenerate imagination. It is fired by the patriotism of Humanity. The passion for souls is its mainspring. Material space is as nothing. The soil of England or America is of no more consequence in the sight of the Son of Man than the soil of Tahiti, Central Africa or Labrador. Evangelism means the love of man as man. That is why its results are so mighty. That is why the most obstinate prejudices melt away before it. That is why, when churches grow cold and self-centered, and lose the evangelistic spirit, straightway those bigotries reappear, and the cruel divisive walls that sever man from his fellow-man are rebuilt. Evangelism, and the spirit it represents, is the secret of the unity of humanity. Within its breast lie the spiritual forces that are to conquer the proud and bitter antagonisms of great empires and nations, safeguard the rights and liberties of the weak, and create the just and equitable

spirit which is the best guarantee of world-peace and world-progress.

I am still insistent that, for the noblest form of evangelism, God wills the dedication of the finest intellectual powers, because I am arguing that the policy of evangelism is demanded and justified by the highest reason. We all remember that the evangelical Revival which saved England morally, spiritually and politically was born at Oxford, which has not only been as Matthew Arnold said, "The home of lost causes and forsaken beliefs," but the birthplace of many a reformation to which mankind owes much. Wise men are always watchful of those centres of thought where the representatives of the coming generation are facing the issues of life. But I do not know that the wisest observers of that day indulged in any radiant prophecies as to the future influence of the much-ridiculed members of the Holy Club, or spared more than a passing thought for two ardent young men, John Wesley and George Whitefield, who were associates in the society stigmatized by that name.

To be quite frank, John Wesley, as a youth, was not a very lovable person; and Whitefield's perfervid and dramatic nature had vent in extravagances calculated, rather to alienate than to attract, the average University undergraduate. But all the same, through the petty persecutions and even violent controversies in which they were involved, the honours of war were all with those who could not be satisfied by the arid and ambitionless faith, which did duty for Christianity over well-nigh the whole area of so-called Christian England. They knew that if God was a fact, and Christ's Gospel a reality, then the existing church in England was a caricature and a farce. They felt, moreover, that to be the ministers of Christianity meant to be in the grip of a resistless Power, servants of an inerrant Will, whose Sovereignty could not be satisfied with anything less than the surrender of the whole being. They faced the claims of Christ, even as they appropriated His promises, with unshrinking trust; and the result was, that when the time came, they were found to

be endowed with a vision of the Kingdom such as had not been conferred by apostolic hands on any of their clerical contemporaries. The name and tradition of George Whitefield are perhaps especially dear to me; but I should not be true to my own convictions if I did not confess that John Wesley, as his was the finer intellect, was the more powerful evangelist so far as permanent results were concerned. There are tests by which this may be judged, apart altogether from the obvious statistical ones. George Whitefield, to the end of his life, never realized what human slavery meant, nor saw any inconsistency in offering spiritual redemption to those whose physical servitude he was unwilling to end. Wesley's keener and stronger mind searched the slave system to its foundations, and unhesitatingly and passionately condemned it. Yet Whitefield's temperament was far more naturally sympathetic and tender than Wesley's. Where he fell short was in intellectual power; and that shortcoming was responsible for the lack of real human statesmanship, which spelled fail-

ure to secure the full results of his unparallelled labours.

I know all that can fairly be alleged against John Wesley's strength on the intellectual side, by reason of the vein of superstition from which he was by no means free, and his lamentable misjudgment of the American case, at the time of the War of Independence. It is well to know that our heroes are so vulnerable, as there is the less temptation to dehumanize them by a doctrine of infallibility. But one thing there is about John Wesley which every careful student of his career, and especially of his preaching career, must observe—that he was never satisfied to persevere in any course which he could not justify to his own reason; and that again and again he changed his views against all his traditions and prejudices because he could not defend an attitude of obscurantism or conservatism. It is characteristic of him that when he first meditated taking orders in the Church of England, he was involved in serious difficulties because of the Calvinism of the articles, and the "excluding

clauses" of the Athanasian Creed. As everybody knows, his objection to Whitefield's programme of field-preaching sprang out of his intimated stiff prejudice in favour of the existing conventions that governed public worship and the preaching of the Gospel.

But he could not resist the argument of the Sermon on the Mount; and he saw that apostolic practice was of far more importance and authority than ecclesiastical conventions, which could neither be defended by Scripture nor by common-sense. Let us remember not only his limitations, but all from which he emancipated himself. Let us remember that by temperament he was an aristocrat; and that his affinities were rather academic than democratic. Remember his scholarly endowments; that he and his brother Charles were accustomed to converse in Latin to the end of their lifetime. Remember his passionate and pathetic devotion to the church in which he was ordained, and his concern to be her faithful son, subject to all reasonable authority. Then recall how, in spite of the past,

and in spite of himself, he was taught by slow experience that for the work of Evangelism he must sound the universal note. "I am a priest of the Church Universal," he claims; and again utters the memorable words, "The world is my parish." The fascination of John Wesley's life is in the gradual achievement of full spiritual liberty, and emancipation from the trammels of ecclesiastical convention, as his spirit is by degrees illuminated in actual contact with his fellows, and through a deep experience of the laws and methods of salvation.

If that argument is not conceded, I should have to make appeal to his sermons; and I should do it with all confidence. As evangelistic discourses they are most significant and most surprising. The evidences of a mind steeped in classical culture and keenly alive to the thought of his time, abound on almost every page. Every perusal of them leaves me wondering, what it was in them, that pierced the consciences of the most hardened sinners to the quick. There is nothing sensational in this evangelism. There is

plain dealing. There is much practical, sensible and serious exhortation as to the sins that corrupt men's lives and harden their hearts. Of rhetorical fireworks there is not a trace. We are less impressed by the vehemence than by the calm strength of them. Yet certain it is, that when this man preached, the world knew that the hour of battle had sounded. Those scenes of fury, which belong now to English history, and in which Wesley's life was again and again in peril, are the tribute to the power of his message. If he had been arguing for a verdict before a society of learned men, he could hardly have reasoned more closely, or employed more classical illustrations. From which fact surely one lesson of supreme value may be drawn. The evangelist, on whom all Hell is let loose, has yet no need to let his mission down, or condescend to base and unworthy methods of attack or of appeal. Such means do not really and permanently *tell*. Even as Wesley was singularly fine and pure in controversy when he was being assailed by a multitude of scurrilous pens, and pelted with gutter-

epithets, so, also, in the warfare which he waged with error and evil in almost every market-place in the land, he was content to use the Gospel weapons of Truth and Love, and as the smoke cleared from the battle-field it was seen that he and his forces were in possession of the best strategical positions.

I grant you that, often enough, in the face of the granite indifference and apathy with which the preacher is confronted, the temptation to try the earthquake, the hurricane and the explosion, and to mistrust the still small voice, is very natural and very great. But sensationalism does not win Wesley's victories, nor ever can. At the long last, the conquests of the Cross are seen to have been won by the old-fashioned weapons of persuasion, patience, sacrifice, courage and overwhelming sympathy, joined to that sagacity or common-sense which in Wesley amounted to genius, and that was the secret of the extraordinary organization which, more than a century after his death, holds together for worship and service millions upon millions of Christian people.

If I do not attempt any description of the complementary but contrasted work of George Whitefield, it is because the characteristics of his famous oratory have been described by so many writers. We may accept the almost universal verdict that for dramatic and declamatory power he had no rival in his own age, and no superior in any age. Doubtless it was true, as Mr. Lecky observes, that he had a narrow range of ideas; but it is also true, as the same historian reminds us, that his genius and disposition suited him to "the position of a roving evangelist," that he was "adapted for the boisterous vicissitudes of the itinerant life," that he excelled in impassioned religious appeals—which seem never to have lost their force or their freshness though repeated hundreds of times—that his preaching "combined almost the highest perfection of acting with the most burning fervour of conviction," that "his gestures were faultless in their beauty and propriety," that he had "a large command of vivid, homely and picturesque English, and an extraordinary measure of the tact

which enables a practiced orator to adapt himself to the character and disposition of his audience," and finally that he possessed "a contagious fervour of enthusiasm which like a resistless torrent bore down every obstacle." All this is very true, if very trite. His art was so perfect that he could invest "tawdry and even ludicrous strokes" of rhetoric with extraordinary power; and it should be remembered that he set it before him, on his own admission, to rouse the passions to the highest point, especially the passions of love, hope and fear.

All these characteristics belong to the externals of his ministry, and it may well be urged that without them his open-air campaign must have failed in its effect. Let us remember how Whitefield viewed the opportunity. To him, England was the theatre of a great struggle, a fierce and terrible war, which must be fought out with every perfection of armament by the Christian host if the day was not to be lost, and the soul of a people destroyed forever. He did not fit himself out with rhetoric and dramatic skill

merely to entertain the populace. "By all means he must save men." If the arts of oratory were necessary that he might storm the consciences of the democracy, then in what better cause could he practice them? We may choose to recall that men and women of the finest taste and highest consequence were avowedly his admirers; that Garrick, David Hume, Benjamin Franklin, Lord Chesterfield and the Countess of Huntingdon came under the spell of his marvellous eloquence; but it is no more than justice to remember, at the same time, that it was not for these that he equipped himself with so much labour, and pursued his methods with so much courage. It was for the miners and the puddlers and the weavers; the masses of neglected and ignorant artisans and field labourers, to whom clergymen and ministers had ceased to appeal, and for whom in all the land there existed no passionate sympathy until George Whitefield arose, and spoke to them in a voice often choked with tears of death in sin, and life in Christ.

It is Whitefield who so pointedly raises, for

the student of oratory and its permanent effects, the problem of emotional preaching. Mr. Lecky tells us that "no talent is naturally more ephemeral than popular oratory." He does not go on to tell us that no talent has produced such mighty results. The man who can kindle the multitude, recreate faith in a worldly age, and inspire the ideals of a whole people does more than all the authors, artists and statesmen put together. We, in England, know perfectly well how the moral power was generated which in the early years of the nineteenth century swept the slave-trade from the Empire, cleansed the prisons, multiplied the schools, revolutionized the constitution, and established a large measure of religious equality. All these reforms, and many others, were the product of the new religious life of the common people. Whitefield may have believed, or thought that he believed, that Christianity aims at gathering out of a lost world an elect, fit but few; but it was his practice and example rather than his dogma that prevailed, and his practice was to make appeal not to the few

but to the masses, believing that the power of Christ over them is beyond all calculation ; and the results, if they discredited his Calvinism, abundantly justified his evangelism.

There are three points of great practical value which I ought to press home upon you before I close. The first concerns the *art* of popular preaching ; the second concerns the place in evangelism of theological formulas ; and the third concerns the "call" of the masses. On each of these I should like to say a very few words.

(1) Popular preaching has come to have a bad name among us. We are tempted to pride ourselves on preaching that is unpopular, and to assume that the best test of good preaching is that it should empty churches rather than fill them. The man who draws and holds the crowd must, we presume, be a superficial preacher, while the man who reduces his audience, like Gideon's army, to a small and high-souled elect, is like a farmer who has successfully operated a milk-separator, and has retained only the pure and rich cream. This operation on the part of a

minister is by no means uncommon, and is usually assumed to be due to profound thinking. I suggest that we have come to the time when we may wisely reconsider this problem. The common people heard our Lord gladly, and it is difficult to pay compliments to ourselves, if they do not care to hear us at all. I submit to you that in our reaction against a frothy emotionalism, we have gone to the extreme of impoverishing our preaching of the human touch, and by so doing we have lost our power over the human heart.

When I read our Lord's infinitely moving lament over Jerusalem, or His impassioned indignation against religious hyprocrisy, I marvel that we can ever imagine Christian preaching to be admirable that is not deeply penetrated with emotion. I am told that this sort of advice does violence to our modern temperament and attitude of mind. Today we are all for self-control. We think a man is a fool to "let himself go." Enthusiasm is at a discount; scepticism is in the ascendant. I am told that love has given

place to the science of eugenics; and that in the well-regulated modern world, when the Romanticist and the Poet have been suppressed in the interest of pure science, emotion and imagination will have no place. If this be so, our Revelation is still to the wise, foolishness; but it does not follow we are to surrender to any so-called scientific school. At any rate, if my protest were the last word ever to be said in a Lyman Beecher lecture in favour of "human preaching" and the cultivation of the art of popular oratory, I would venture to say it. You have every chord of the human heart to play on. Surely the art of eliciting their music is worthy of your study and cultivation. Men and women, after all their history and education, are still human beings, compounded of laughter and tears, sunshine and shadow. Humanity is still, as it has always been, capable of the heights of heroism, and the depths of shame. Not one of the elemental human passions has been eradicated by all our philosophies. No process of evolution has carried us, or ever will, beyond their grip.

Life and death are just as poignant experiences as in the early days of our race ; and if our refinements have done anything for us, they have made us more sensitive and not more stoical. We may, of course, ignore these facts, and assume that those to whom we preach are above all things engrossed with metaphysics, and have an inward craving for the critical probability that there were two Isaiahs. But if that is our attitude we have much to learn. Nobody ought ever to go into a pulpit who can think and talk about sin and salvation, and the Cross of Christ, which is for all true men the symbol of hope and service, without profound emotion and passion.

I recognize that for the business of reading moral essays, disquisitions on ethics, or treatises on movements in theology, but little equipment in oratory is needed. Oratory indeed is unthinkable apart from the inspiration of some great human theme. When the preacher's soul is blessed with real vision, and the hand of the Lord his God is upon him, he will be conscious of profound unrest

until he can deliver his soul to those multitudes in the valley of decision, to whom his message represents the way of life and liberty. Do not misunderstand me. The order of preaching friars must always be a catholic one; and there is room in it for the man of quiet, thoughtful spirit who delivers to a devoted flock his meditations on the Gospel. But I like that phrase of the apostle of Patmos, descriptive of his own experience—"He *carried me away* in the spirit." We cannot always be in the same mood, nor if it were possible would it be well. But surely this is one of our noblest capacities—this of being transported out of ourselves by the vision of God, and of His will, "carried away" by the rush of emotion, enthusiasm and imagination to that lofty standpoint where we greet the dawn of the Day of Christ's Kingdom on earth; and watch the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. That is why I lay stress to-day upon the highest possibilities of preaching. We are always being told that this is a materialistic age; that modern in-

dustrialism has no soul ; that as our machines grow more human, the men who make them grow more mechanical. It is true. And for that very reason we want Poetry back again, and Art, and Music, and, above all, the Prophet who is the supreme interpreter of the spiritual.

When I look at the famous portraits of Whitefield, and conceive him as he faces the multitude under God's sky, with the heavens for sounding-board, the hillsides for meeting-house, and some rude boulder for pulpit ; as his splendid energy expresses itself in the fold and sweep of his robes, and his passion for souls in his kindled countenance, his flashing eye, and the tender solemn tones of his voice, I feel as if this is the one thing to pray for—that God will raise up a new race of genuine orators of the evangel, who without any unworthy artifices will shake men's souls and thrill their hearts.

(2) In the second place I am bound very briefly to express my belief that theological formulas will matter comparatively little in the new evangelism. My reason for saying this

is an historical one. The two men who together were responsible for the Evangelical Revival were representatives of two contrasted schools of theology, which all the praiseworthy efforts of their successors have not been able wholly to reconcile. Whitefield affirmed with immense conviction what Wesley decried with equal strenuousness. There never has been in the history of theological controversy, a deluge of pamphlets so virulent, and so scurrilous as those with which their partisans assailed one another. You might easily have supposed that these antagonistic schools of theologians would have neutralized one another, or, at least, minimized the general effect of their mutual labours. But it was not so. And the reason is, of course, that in the mercy of God the blunders of our finite minds are not permitted to prevent His Word from having free course and being glorified. It is not creeds that bring the breath of life back to exhausted souls, but faith.

That is not to say of course that crude and unworthy teaching about God or man may

not produce painful reaction of an intellectual sort. This that I am saying is no plea for slipshod and shallow thinking. But just as the most profound and wise theology may utterly fail to inspire the hearer to virtue and to faith, apart from men of soul and fire to believe it and to preach it; so a theology that is greatly inferior in intellectual strength may nevertheless be more than compensated for by a preacher whose heart God hath touched. It is faith, faith, faith, that conquers the world. The life of God is the strength of the saints; and it is the same divine life in Calvin and in Wesley, in St. Francis of Assisi and John Knox, in Jonathan Edwards and Henry Ward Beecher. In man's fight for life as a spiritual being the mystic breath of the Divine Spirit is more than all our formulas.

(3) Lastly, evangelism recognizes the call of the masses. Explorers tell us that there is a resistless power in "the lure of the wild." They tell us that after a taste of it they soon weary of our tame conventional civilization; and prefer all the risks and hardships and

perils of the wild to the monotony of our unambitious and routine existence. There is a very true parallel between the life of the explorer and the life of the evangelist. The true evangelist listens to the call of the wild —that raw, untamed, passionate human nature that is a yet unknown and uncultivated soil but that has all the virgin possibilities of limitless fertility. I do not think our Lord had no feeling of reverence for the Temple and the synagogue, and those who were in sincere association with these, but I do think His soul responded to the call of the wild,— the churchless multitude, neglected, outcast, uncultured, waiting only for the ploughshare and the seed to become glorious with the harvests of God. To-day we may well thank God, as I most humbly do, for our churches. They form the base of operations for every good and great campaign. But the campaign must not be restricted to their boundaries. The campaign is for the lands beyond the frontiers. The Church is still the homeland to all the soldiers. Its patriotism fires us. The warmth and joy of its hearth glow

in our hearts when we are out on the great adventure. Perhaps we never learn to love it until we come to know at first hand the meaning of that unhallowed secularity where its atmosphere does not extend. Let every preacher resolve he will be churchman and evangelist in one. The call of the Church, and the call of the wild are both to be heard, I think, in the soul of every true ambassador of Christ. We may not love Jerusalem less; but the song of the pioneer must be ever in our hearts and on our lips, "They shall build the old wastes—the ancient wilds,—they shall raise up the former desolations, they shall repair the waste cities,—the civilizations run to waste,—the desolations of many generations."

LECTURE VIII

THE ROMANCE OF MODERN PREACHING

LECTURE VIII

THE ROMANCE OF MODERN PREACHING

THE danger of lectures that deal mainly with the past, is lest the final impression should be left, that our own time is in the nature of an anti-climax to the illustrious generations we have been passing in review; that the great gates leading into the spacious lands of opportunity are all closed, and that nothing remains to us but some shabby and petty doors giving upon meagre and uninteresting fields. Some critics speak as if there would have been no romantic or heroic chapters in Christian history, but for the grim and forbidding figures of the bigot and the tyrant, with all their sinister apparatus of torture and death. Sermons have been preached in celebration of the funeral of bigotry; though bigotry takes a deal of burying, and has singular gifts of resurrection after its obsequies have

been ostensibly performed. Nevertheless, the arm of the persecuter has been so far shortened that we no longer see the blackened stake in the market-place; and the instruments by which heretics were put to the question, are regarded as the evil evidence of an intolerance and an inhumanity that we have outgrown. Now and then, even in those days, our heroes and heroines suffer death at the hands of those who know not what they do. Still the graves of the self-exiled evangelists of the Cross multiply in fever-haunted lands; and lonely saints make brotherhood with lepers, or burn out for Christ among savages on remote islands or in the dark African interior. But apart altogether from the fascination of incidents such as these, which lend themselves to picturesque descriptions, I am determined to persuade you in this closing lecture that the work of the preacher in modern times remains as romantic and dramatic as ever.

The question is whether we believe in the mission of the Christian prophet as Wagner, let us say, believed in the mission of Music,

or G. F. Watts in the mission of Art. Of the latter, as you may remember, a modern poet wrote these fine lines by way of epitaph:

"He knew her destined mission, dared to hail
The place assigned her in the heavenly plan,
Reader of visions hid behind the veil;
Elect interpreter of God to man."

That is no more than to say that George Frederick Watts was an artist with the soul of a prophet; and that with his canvas for pulpit he preached, and will preach as long as his pictures last, sermons that prove him to be verily an "elect interpreter of God to man." In whatever medium he works, the man who has the soul of the prophet will fulfill the same mission. His will be the skill to read the "visions hid behind the veil." He will keep alive the faith and the knowledge that there is a world of reality behind the veil. Thus he will fulfill his destiny to deliver his generation from the dark influences of a materialistic science, and to restore Faith, Hope and Love as the guiding and governing realities of life. Let me repeat what I have said before—that if the preacher is

doomed to disappear as rationalism and materialism triumph, then the poet, the artist and the musician will disappear in like manner at the same time and for the same reason.

But now let us ask ourselves, what it is about our high calling that gives it a perennial fascination and glory? For the only thing that can kill preaching is, that we should lose the sense of its majesty and unique authority. The first thing that I would say is, that *preaching can never lose its place so long as the mystery and wonder of the human spirit remain.* For we are dealing with that which is the source of all the amazing interest of life. Man is a creature mystically elect to strange conflicts and adventures of mind and soul. He stands alone in God's august creation, in that he knows the exaltation of spiritual vision, and the humiliation of remorse for sin. He has inexplicable beatitudes, and as inexplicable sorrows. His mysterious history is blood-stained and tragic; but it is lighted everywhere with almost incredible heroism. Robert Louis Stevenson would persuade us that personality is dual, and that every soul

among us is half angel and half devil. Certain it is that underneath purely worldly exteriors, dwell unsuspected philanthropies and benevolences. Sordid and callous speculators whose ambition seems to be to rig markets, or inflate and depress shares at will, have pure affections and holy memories lying detached from their daily business existence, like a ring of lilies around some foul morass. Conversely, some men and women to whom the world bows down in respect and esteem, carry with them the memory of secret sins, the consequences of which all their zeal cannot overtake.

The homes of the poor are the dwelling-places of romance. Not a tenement staircase that does not echo to the feet of Love and Hope, and all the attendant train of ministering angels; while Jealousy, Envy and Despair and their evil brood are to be met there likewise. I venture to say it is the experience of all those who visit sympathetically among the poor, that they rarely come across any house where, in some corner or other, they do not distinguish the footprints of the

Son of Man; He makes the place of His feet glorious. The more we know of life the more we discover what compensations and alleviations are due to the divine capacities of the human spirit. The child of poverty sits in some corner of the ill-furnished room. She is reading the story of "Ivanhoe," and following breathlessly the adventures of the stainless Knight. For a while she is not in that wretched home at all. For her the lists are set, and the lances conched, and the horses caparisoned. To her knights bow, and courtiers bend, and grand ladies smile. Forgotten are hunger and hardship and the dreary outlook. She too is "carried away in the spirit." How our hearts would leap if we could really read all that lies behind the faces that confront us so enigmatically on the Sunday. What of their faiths and their doubts; their ambitions and dissatisfactions; their yearnings and wistfulness—and all covered with so impenetrable a mask that except in rare cases of confidence their nearest and dearest friends are not permitted to penetrate beneath the surface to the intimacy

of their real life? Yet suddenly, at any moment, that may happen which will break up all reserve, and bring the strong man to you groping blindly for light, pleading for help and comfort like a little child. For the hour cometh to all when it is Jesus Christ or nothing; and all the dollars in America cannot pay the passage-money across the inevitable sea.

We preachers live always in the conscious presence of the supreme mysteries. We deal with men and women, many of whom are afraid to face them. It is our business to know what doubt and grief and death can do; it is our business to prove what, given the Gospel, doubt and grief and death cannot do. But I should delude you if I were to suggest, that this sacred task is to any of us at any time an easy one. The first incident in my own ministry that I vividly remember, was connected with a bright young girl who on her twenty-first birthday was enjoying a picnic-party on the Thames. Her lover went to the side of the launch to get a camp-stool for a friend, tripped and fell into

the river and was drowned before her eyes. In a moment life's happiest pageantry turned to darkest tragedy. Well do I remember being asked to go and see this stricken one, and I shall never forget pacing up and down the street outside the house with the drawn blinds, trying to muster up courage to go in. Why had no one told me that the Christian ministry was like this? I can see now in the dark room the white marble face as of one changed to stone; I can see her holding out hands to me for faith, when I was bankrupt of my own!

It is easy to stand up in a pulpit, and to a listening crowd preach the truth of Christianity; but the preacher has to say something that will count for faith and comfort, when souls are tortured by sorrow almost to the last agony. Have you taken a walk in the spring-time, and felt disposed to take your shoes from off your feet before the miracle of a flowering thorn? What a little while ago was a bunch of black stems, with forbidding spikes and thorns, is now a glorious mass of gay flowers, shedding fragrance all around.

What a Divine touch it is that can make the thorn to flower, and express its inner life in such rare grace and scent! Have we a like Divine secret to turn the thorns of life to beauty and sweetness? Let no man venture into the ministry without that knowledge. It is the veritable key that opens the dungeon of Despair.

The men who interest and fascinate us most are they who illustrate the wonder of the human spirit, and teach us preachers with what potentialities we have to deal. Man's uniqueness in the universe lies in the wrestlings that are not with flesh and blood, the struggle for existence that is not physical but spiritual, the conflicts with principalities and powers that are invisible but real. Bunyan suffered much from external persecutions, but no one who has read his autobiography can possibly believe that his physical sufferings in prison, were at all comparable to his agony of mind and spirit, when doubts threatened the faith that was the very breath of life to him. Cromwell knew the pains and hardships of the battle-field and the sorrows

that scorn and hatred can inflict; but his greatest conflicts were in the spirit, and his hardest fights were with himself and his own passionate temper and disposition. Luther tasted to the full the cup of tribulation and anxiety; but you must read his commentaries to discover that the fiercest war he waged was not with the Church of Rome, but with the treachery of his own heart and will.

You will ask yourselves whether such men as these are alone in their mysterious strife, or whether it is in some degree appointed to us all. What means this exercise of the mind and soul in the problems of faith? Have we not problems enough of a more practical sort? Why is mankind thus tormented with spiritual anxieties? Why, indeed, if the sceptic philosophy of to-day be true which reduces all faith to illusion, and spiritual vision to the agitation of certain nerve-centres! By that interpretation, the noblest chapters in biography are the record of incredible folly and stupendous tragedy. These agonies of the higher life, that mark the progress of man with drops of bloody sweat, that distinguish

all his pilgrimage through the valley of humiliation and the shadow of death—what are they but the proofs of the divinity of the human spirit, and its struggles in the grip of the consciousness of its destiny, and of the sublime imperative of faith?

The second thing I would say to you is, that *amid all changes of thought and phrase the wonder of conversion remains*, to be the supreme joy and glory of the preacher. A congregation gathered in the name of Christ, and prepared by prayer for that message which is the supreme call to life, is to me a momentous assembly. It is the arena where God and Self fight out stupendous duels. It furnishes an atmosphere in which anything may happen. At any moment Saul may come to his crisis and the new Paul be born. For our Gospel is not the survival of the fit; but the revival of the unfit. And here in the society of Christ, those divine forces are leagued and focussed which decide the destinies of individuals, and even of nations. Within that congregation men are being braced up for big renunciations, and sacri-

ficial enterprises. The voice from the pulpit is the ally of the trembling and even fainting soul, that is at the point of giving up the battle for virtue and righteousness. Lame consciences struggle to their feet again. Nerveless wills are stiffened and strengthened. It is as if a wave of pure ozone passed over the breathers of some exhausted air. You feel the stir of hope. Feeble and enervated spirits drink the elixir of life, and are conscious of recovery of tone and health. The tonic air from the hills of God works its miracle of rejuvenation, and faith is born again.

There are so many sorts of conversion. It is conversion when the faithless soul believes; and it is conversion when a little faith becomes a larger faith. It is conversion when bad men become good men; and it is conversion when good men become better men. It is conversion when the hands that hang down are lifted up; and when the lame and erring feet are turned back into the way. It is conversion when the business standards of the world are exchanged for

higher and more human standards; and when the decision to do the brave and honourable thing forces itself within a worldly mind. While the preacher is at work, any one and all of these changes may take place. If he believes in his business, and in the coöperation of the Divine Spirit, he expects great events to happen. No service can ever fall to the dead level of the commonplace. Every hour spent within that atmosphere of faith, beneath the spell of Christ's presence and personality, is charged with mystic feeling.

My own personal belief is that we do not realize, as we might, the possibility of sudden conversions. When we read the story of Henry Barrowe, who was one of the founders of modern Congregationalism, passing down the Strand in a wild mood, and entering a church to scoff, and remaining to pray, passing as Lord Bacon said "at one leap" from a libertine youth to "preciseness of conduct," we do not doubt the story, and all Barrowe's after life until the day of his martyrdom was a witness to its reality. But who can ex-

plain that magic "leap" of the spirit from dissoluteness to uprightness, and from the darkness of doubt to the light of faith? Was such an experience possible only in days of intellectual renaissance, or moral revival? Is it too much to hope that the assembly of praying and believing souls, and the witness of God's ambassador, may still lay a sacred spell upon the soul? In the biography of one, who even in our tolerant nineteenth century suffered imprisonment in England for conscience' sake, and wrote in his prison a history of America, it is told how in his careless youth he was arrested by the preacher's message; and when, at the close of the sermon, the congregation began to sing the quaint old hymn

> "If Jesus is yours, you have a true friend;
> His goodness endures the same to the end.
> Though pleasures may tarry and comforts decline
> He cannot miscarry, His aid is divine,"

"such was the emotion I experienced," he says, "that I cried out before them all—'Jesus is mine!'" That experience was one on which he never went back; and the Pres-

ence he realized then and there lighted in later days his prison cell.

But my question is whether we have lost the capacity to force careless and worldly hearers to review their life? Possibly if your children of to-day were suddenly to rise up and make use of some such exclamation as I have indicated, you would call in the family physician, and ask him whether he thought it was the liver or the nerves. The very possibility of those searching spiritual experiences which shake life to its centre seems so remote to most of us, that it can hardly be said to come within our consciousness. Yet there is not one of us who does not know that, historically, these sudden illuminations have often marked the birth-hour of new eras of human progress. I have never thought that John Wesley was a very likely subject for abrupt mental or spiritual change; for in many ways he was compact of ecclesiastical prejudices. Yet at that little Moravian room in Aldersgate Street, when suddenly he became conscious of that strange inward warmth and light of which he wrote so

simply and nobly, Mr. Lecky tells us a new chapter in English history was opened, and, I may add, one of the most fruitful of all chapters.

Those ministers, if such there be, who do not believe in these swift crises in man's intellectual and spiritual life, are those who are still the victims of the false view of time, and who have not yet realized with what freight of significance these flying minutes may be laden. This belongs to the romance of our opportunity, that so much destiny may be crowded into so brief an occasion. The surgeon may make careful preparations, but how deft and swift is the critical work when the cataract has at last to be removed from the eye. The miracle of spiritual sight-giving is swifter still. The flash of a thought—who can measure the duration of it? The glow of a new-born affection—who can estimate the length of time of its origin? The outreach of the soul in faith towards its Saviour—by what principles can you judge if it be swift or slow? All that we know is that God can do His most amazing work on

human souls with a rapidity that even to think of dazzles us. We have ceased to repeat, and perhaps to believe, the old lines:

> "Between the saddle and the ground
> I mercy sought, and mercy found."

But no transition of thought will ever destroy the inherent truth and beauty of the memorable sentence in Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance," describing the suicide of Zenobia, "the fleeting moment after Zenobia sank into the dark pool—when her breath was gone, and her soul at her lips—was as long, in its capacity of God's infinite forgiveness, as the lifetime of the world."

Again, and in the same connection, let me remind you that the preacher is always living through the romance of the spring-tide. The spring-tide is the time of mystic changes; when unpromising and unattractive seeds and bulbs are clothed upon with a miraculous raiment of loveliness. It is the time when myriads of unsuspected germs of life

break forth into living green, and array themselves in gay and glistering garments. It is the time when the soft compelling breath of spring touches the withered and decaying trunks of ancient trees, and the magic sap travels up their gnarled and knotted frames and crowns them once again with glory of leaf and fruit. It is the time when the shepherd and the labourer find their pathways on field and hillside brave with shining flowers. It is the time when even the slum child's seeds in a broken flower-pot on a rusty balcony, where the rays of the sun are rare visitors, answer to the secret call to life and put forth bloom and fragrance. All this, God help us, we take for granted; and our modern souls are too full of the notion that it is scientifically explicable to surrender to the simple imperishable marvel and rapture of it. But we preachers have yet to learn that the greatest thing God ever does, is not when He spins His worlds in space, or regenerates the face of nature by the annual miracle of spring, but when human hearts cry out with unspeakable joy, "As for our

transgressions Thou shalt purge them away." The Hand that can reach to the secret springs of life, and purify them, washing the stain from the conscience, and cleansing the imagination of its pollutions, is engaged in performing the most amazing miracle in time. In the true church it is always spring-time. From January to December is one season of regeneration. Revival is often thought of as spasmodic and occasional; but that is our fault. It is normal. The Resurrection time is not at Easter alone. There is not a moment of any day, in any year, when we may not rise with Christ into newness of life, and walk in His ways with transfigured spirits. All this goes to make up the charm, the fascination, the rapture, the romance of the ministry.

The third point that I would emphasize is, that *we are manifestly on the eve of new applications of Christ's teaching, which will revive the interest of the people in Christianity to a surprising degree.* One of the most remarkable features in the history of Christian progress during the past few years in

my own country, has been the creation of a new organization of a very simple character called "The Brotherhood Movement." It has attracted to itself hundreds of thousands of men; and the secret of its attraction is twofold. Firstly, it presents for their acceptance a very simple faith, and secondly it brings them to close quarters with certain giant social evils which we of the churches have ignored too long. It may seem to some of you incredible, but it is literally true, that it came as a revelation to multitudes of men that Christianity had anything to say about poverty more than that all good Christian people ought to be charitable to the poor. Meanwhile, the poor themselves were inscribing on their banners "Justice not Charity," and when Christianity was carefully examined the surprising discovery was made that Christ Jesus and His apostles had much to say about Righteousness and Justice, and comparatively little to say about the duty of being charitable, save as it was included in the larger ideal.

The young preachers of recent years have

explored the contents of the word "Righteousness," with the enthusiasm of pioneers opening up rich and fertile lands for the inheritance of the future. Something has been happening even within the academic borders of our colleges. Men have been facing life as it is, and bringing it to the light of Christ. The social economist has invaded our quiet sanctuaries of religious thought with his disturbing facts and figures; and our young men have seen visions. The new compulsion has driven them down to the over-crowded areas where the disinherited of civilization make shift to exist; and the result has been that unique personal experience which changes scientific statistics into human facts. Is any one surprised that a new note can be detected in our preaching? Does any one marvel that young prophets are flinging down their challenge to society; and that features of industrialism which have been too long accepted as inevitable are to-day the objects of a fiery arraignment by men who are looking at them through eyes which Christ has purged and enlightened?

We are beginning to believe things which would have appalled our ancestors. We are beginning to believe that poverty need not exist; and that the restrictions upon human life and happiness, due to poverty, may be abolished. We see in the near future an almost indefinite elevation of the standard of living; and we throw the whole authority of Christianity into the scales in favour of the two great modern ideals, that work shall be equitably remunerated, and that wealth shall be equitably distributed.

After all it is not strange. Great causes always create a race of prophets. The watchword of the past century was Freedom. What orators the passion for Freedom created in this great land! Aye, and what martyrs for Freedom it made! The watchword of our new century is Justice. It will create as splendid an army of prophets; and it may very well be that before the victory is won, men and women will have to buy the new inheritance at a great price. But buy it they will; for the master passion in the breasts of the noblest of our young men is

that the will of the Father shall be done "on earth as it is in heaven."

You will let me emphasize here a thought that, familiar as it is, must win an entrance into all your minds if you really mean *preaching*. Knowledge should be great wealth. But even as Mr. Ruskin used to teach that only such of our possessions as we well and truly use are well for us, or wealth; so it is with our treasures of knowledge. They only become mental wealth as they are efficiently and unselfishly used. Even the mere knowledge of Scripture may prove an arch deceiver. To know the names and the dates of the kings of Israel and Judah, is not necessarily to be a religious man; any more than to be able to answer Dr. Watts' catechism with all the proof texts, makes the youthful expert a true theologian. Science to-day is always with us, deluging us with statistics. Many a man has sought a reputation for philanthropy on the strength of his ability to quote columns of social facts. If your young student of medical and surgical science can label every bone in your anatomy, and dis-

course learnedly on the function of every vital nerve, vein or tissue; if his knowledge of the scientific facts of the human organism is encyclopædic, he may, nevertheless, be as far removed from being a true prophet in his own sphere, as some dull and heavy bookman is from being a great teacher. But if your student of medicine and surgery be inspired by a noble passion for humanity; if he is ambitious to be able to keep the breadwinner well for his work, to sustain the mother in the hour of motherhood, to cherish childhood for the sake of its God-given possibilities, then he is in the way of becoming a very prophet of health, and a living exponent of the great saying of Paul that love rejoiceth in the truth. Just in the same way the mere accumulated facts as to human life may produce a scholar rather than a seer. All the social statistics ever compiled in the new sociological laboratories may only prove an incubus upon the mind, and a darkening of counsel. I have known parliaments, as well as churches, as intimidated by statistics as the ten craven-hearted spies were cowed

by the walled cities of Canaan and the stature of the sons of the Anakim. There has come the ringing cry of some one with the divine genius of faith, "Let us go up against them, for we are well able to overcome them," and somehow the walls of Jericho have fallen, and impossibilities have melted away like the mists of morning. So we are beginning to see, beneath the baptism of our new Pentecost, that our vast inexorable problems, compounded of prejudices, vested interests, and ancient wrongs are by no means as impregnable as they look. But they constitute a supreme appeal to faith, and to what I may call Christian patriotism.

The preacher who is going forth unto the battle-field to-day for the kingdom of God on earth, will enter the fray to hearkening strains of music. The Church of Christ to-day does not despair of calling into existence a Christian civilization. It refuses to acquiesce in the permanence of those social vices and social wrongs that have entrenched themselves so deeply even under the visible authority of the Cross. There is arising an army of young

knights of Christ who have taken sacramental vows, that none of their brethren shall have to live in the future under conditions that are fatal alike to physical health and to even a moderate standard of chastity and honour. They have vowed that the cruel exigencies of a merciless competition shall not always kill the truth and self-respect of those who are taken in its toils. They are resolved that the progress of humanity shall be something better and nobler than an unrelieved struggle for existence; and men something diviner than

> "Dragons of the prime
> That tare each other in their slime."

They are resolved—"highly resolved," as Lincoln used to say—that the slum and the sweater shall vanish from the face of this earth which Christ's feet once trod, and His deathless love forever sanctifies. They are resolved that men and women shall not always be subjected to the legion of temptations that centre in the gaming hell and the saloon. They are resolved that human conditions of labour and life, in the factory and

on the land, shall be substituted for conditions which made health and happiness almost impossible. In other words, they have caught the glow of the idealism of the great Jewish prophets who saw in vision the Messianic age, and hailed it as the destined day of God.

I am not here to urge you to identify yourselves with any particular school of economics or politics. I am one of those who can honestly claim, that I can count the political sermons I have preached in twenty-five years on the fingers of one hand. But that has been because I have taken other and more unconventional opportunities of dealing with great national issues, as they have arisen in my own country. But I hold that that man's soul is dead, and he is thereby incapacitated for the office of preacher, who is insensitive to the great human movements that are advancing in every land, and that have for their object the throwing wide open of the doors of opportunity to all citizens, so as to make possible for every worker a decent competence, and for every child the fullest measure of culture of which it is capable. Possibly some of the

things that I am venturing to say to you, are leading me on to dangerous ground. If so, I must take the risk. This is not a plea for any special set of opinions; but it is a plea for wide and generous social sympathies, and such clear and courageous outlook as gave to the Hebrew prophets the religious leadership of their generation.

My fourth point is, that *over this world of military camps, bristling frontiers and armoured fleets, there is being heard to-day with new insistence the ever-romantic strains of the angels' song of Peace and Goodwill.* The Gospel has a twofold mission. It is ours to break down the barriers between man and God, and it is ours to break down the barriers between man and man. Nobody can calculate the effect on the life of this world, if every minister of Christ were to know himself charged with full authority as an ambassador of peace, and were to make it a definite part of his mission to plead the cause of brotherhood with all other peoples. No governments could resist such concerted appeal. The Church of Christ can, if she will,

make the Hague Tribunal the centre of the world's hopes. In my honest judgment, unless the Church brings this era of militarism to a close, and exorcises the demons of hated, suspicion and aggression, there is no power that can. And it is right in the line of the missionary crusade. It is but obedience to marching orders, after all. I want to appeal to you to include this definitely in your military accoutrement—this fighting faith in a world subject to reason and justice because Christ-ruled. I ask you to believe that no ideal of organized Peace is too extravagant or ambitious to stand within your horizon. To-day, all the dreams of science, which were discredited and derided for generations by that much overrated quality called common-sense, are coming true. The children of faith and imagination have had revealed unto them what was hidden from the sapient and prudent.

"The Heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales."

Science's predictions are coming true; science's splendid faith is being justified. The impossible is happening before our eyes. The sages are being confounded; and, as always happens, the seers are triumphing, and the visionaries and the idealists are seen to be the supremely practical people. But we are still short-sighted; at odds with the man who sees a stage further than we can. Mr. Arnold Bennett's inventor is full of scorn for the man who is the mere slave of yesterday and who will not believe that a wooden ship must give way to an iron ship, but he is equally scornful of the heir of to-morrow who perceives that an iron ship must give way to a steel ship. But the most urgent question of our day is whether moral progress is going to keep pace with material progress.

"If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in rising,
If we wrapt the globe intently with one hot electric breath,
'Twere but power within our tether, no new spirit-power comprising,
And in life we were not greater men nor bolder men in death."

We hail the realized hopes and dreams of science, but shall the higher science arrive with her material miracles, and is there to be nothing but defeat and despair for the higher morality? Shall Reason win the day in every sphere except where her victories would be most fruitful? Shall we erase from the canvas of the future the most glowing of all visions—the day of Humanity

"When the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle-flags are furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world."

Who will say that man shall ride upon the wings of the wind, and talk across the empty spaces of ocean from ship to ship and from shore to shore, and yet shall not conquer the selfishness, mistrust and hatred in his own heart? Who will say that he shall vanquish every physical disease, only to be conquered by the venom of malice, envy and suspicion that poisons the veins of his own soul? No, if you do your duty, the progress in the world's idealism shall keep pace with her advance in material prosperity; and the

Church's early ideal of internationalism shall be realized, with its glorious consequences in the deliverance of the weary nations from the burdens beneath which they groan; and the emancipation of the human spirit everywhere, from those dark shadows of mistrust and fear which have been the perpetual nightmare of the past.

I have done. It remains only for me to congratulate you on your birthright. You are born to an inheritance in a great and splendid age. All the Christian centuries offer you their hoarded wealth. For you every prophet has prophesied until now; for you the martyrs suffered, and the saints glorified God in shining lives of holy love and service. For you the poets have sung, and at your feet every one of the world-thinkers has laid the harvest of his brain. For the last hundred years Science has been weaving its wizard spells about this earth, and drawing us all nearer and nearer together, so that we may contribute what is best in our life to the common stock of the world's wealth.

Into this magnificent heritage you have been born; and into the full possession of it you are about to enter. My advice to you is, in a word, "Belong to your century." "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." To be alive here and now, with the call of God in your souls, and the widening opportunities of to-day at your doors, is indeed to have been crowned by Heaven. Let no man discrown you. Do not live in the past. Do not let the glamour of days and events gone by seduce you from your loyalty to the present hour. Whatever faults may be chargeable to our century, it is the best century for you and me. That is why I appeal to you with all affection and solemnity. "*To-day*, oh, that ye would hear His voice!" The voice of God in the life of *to-day!*

I have recalled to you, in the course of these lectures, some of the memorable words and deeds of those whose names are inscribed in letters of gold on the roll of the Church's leaders and prophets. It would have been a great thing no doubt to have run with Timothy on some errand for St. Paul. It would

have been a great thing to have dared everything for Christ when Nero was on the throne. It would have been a great thing to have confronted emperors with Athanasius, to have died for freedom with Savonarola, to have crossed the Atlantic with Brewster and Bradford, to have waked the world to new spiritual life with Whitefield and Wesley. But let no man say that our age is inferior in opportunity to any that has gone before. The one demand is the consecrated spirit, and the forward mind.

It will belong to your ministry to conserve for the men and women of to-day the eternal truths in which our fathers lived, but to present those truths as they have passed through the living mind and been shined upon by the broadening light, that is the precious gift of God to our generation. I think perhaps this ministry of yours can be best realized from that description of the conversation between the prophet Brand and his wife Agnes, that we owe to the genius of Ibsen.

Brand says:

"Oftentimes my light is low,
Dim my reason, dull my thought,
And there seems a kind of gladness
In immeasurable sadness.
In such hours as these I see
God, as at no other, near;
Oh, so near, it seems to me
I could speak and He would hear.
Like a lost child then I long
To be folded to His heart,
And be gathered by His strong
Tender Father-arms to rest."

And Agnes says:

"Brand, oh see Him so alway!
To thy supplication near —
God of love and not of fear."

But Brand replies:

"No, I may not bar His way,
Nor run counter to my call;
I must see Him, vast, sublime
As the Heavens,—a pigmy Time,
Needs a giant God withal!"

"Oh! but thou mayst see Him near,
See Him as a Father dear,
Bow thy head upon His breast,
There, when thou art weary, rest,
Then, return, with face aglow
From His presence, fair and free,
Bear His glory down to me
Worn with battle-thrust and throe!"

It is given, I think, to the prophet of to-day to combine a great sense of God's majesty and might with an equal sense of His nearness and fathomless love. The mighty God is the Everlasting Father, and we must preach the Gospel so. As Browning says:

"I who saw Power see now Love perfect too!"

There is no more to be said. Let us have courage. Our mission is to inspire men; and in Christ is inexhaustible inspiration; and revelation that is always new. In Mr. Henry James' masterpiece "Roderick Hudson," there is the clever successful artist Gloriani, who has sold his soul to make money, and grown cynical as to the transaction. He thinks the true inspiration of genius is but a fickle thing, and few if any can afford to pay the price. "My dear fellow," he says to the real artist who is suffering from temporary eclipse of faith, "passion burns out, inspiration runs to seed. Some fine day every artist finds himself sitting face to face with his lump of clay, with his empty canvas, with his sheet of blank

paper, waiting in vain for the revelation to be made, for the Muse to descend. He must learn to do without the Muse. When the fickle jade forgets her way to your studio don't waste any time in tearing your hair and meditating suicide. Come round and see me, and I will show you how to console yourself."

Many has been the minister who has thought and felt like that. He sees himself sitting before a blank sheet of paper, waiting in vain for the sermon that will not come. He thinks that, if not now, yet a score of years on, his inspiration may have "run to seed." What is he to do? Is he "to learn to do without the Muse"? Is he to "console himself" by some lower ideal and come to regard himself as a hireling, and to look upon his work as a profession and a livelihood? God forbid. We cannot do without the spirit—without the inspiration. Without that mystic light and power, our art is indeed barren and contemptible. But, remember, our inspiration includes all others. Nature, Poetry, Art, Literature, Life—we

have the freedom of all the schools. And above and beyond all others, we have the school of Christ. No minister shall ever be bankrupt of a message who is living in that Society. The jaded brain may sometimes refuse its office. We may feel some Sunday evening as if we had fired our last shot. But there is still for the child of faith a cruse of oil and a barrel of meal, that mystically do not fail.

The miracle of our calling is that they who wait upon the Lord renew their strength. We may not always mount up on wings as eagles, nor is it well we should. But by the grace of God vouchsafed to us we can run and not be weary; we can walk—briskly, one hopes!—and not faint. In the splendid certainty of inspiration which is the gift of a God whose gifts are "without repentance," may you accept your ministry at your Master's hands; and living in the dignity and the glory of it, serve your generation, by the will of God, before you fall asleep!

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